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THE
LIBERTINES:
A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Sed omnes una manet nox,
Et calcanda semel via lethi.

HOR.

But see a reverend form arise,
With beck'ning hands and awful eyes;
"Where La Trappe's silent vot'ries weep,
"Or virgins midnight vigils keep,
"The cloister drear, the hallow'd gloom
"Break the dark distance of the tomb,
"Ah! thither, restless Töwer, flee,
"And there sweet peace shall lodge with thee."—
Vain boast of frantic zeal and sullen care,
Praying, 'mid sighs and groans, or musing in despair.

DYER'S ODES.

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1798.



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PREFACE.

THE design of writing a Novel, on the following subject, first occurred to the Author, on reading various accounts of the Spanish and Portuguese INQUISITIONS. The cruelties practised by these Tribunals will scarcely be credited by such as have not made them the subject of their inquiry, and can only be equalled by the debaucheries of their principal Administrators. Under the mask of Religion, vices, of the most gigantic size, have been perpetrated, every social affection interrupted, every moral distinction destroyed.

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PREFACE.

To such, as think these pages too highly coloured, or that they carry an air of improbability, the Author begs leave to suggest, that, for the principal history, he is indebted to a fact well authenticated, and which he first read in an old French pamphlet. A more modern instance, however, of the horrid cruelty, practised by the Inquisition, occurred in the case of Mr. Martin, an English gentleman, who was imprisoned there, in the year 1714, but who was almost miraculously delivered, and publicly exposed its enormities.

Some remarkable particulars, relative to this infernal Institution, may also be read in Mr. Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches.—Mr. Howard, when he visited the prisons at Valladolid, so late as

PREFACE.

1784, observes, "that the very sight of
"the Inquisition struck terror in the
"common people, as they passed it."

It is, indeed, admitted, that the violence of this iniquitous Tribunal is considerably abated: its very existence, however, is an evil of magnitude. With respect to the Author's general observations on Hypocrisy, they will be found applicable to more characters than Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitors.

In describing the profligate manners of the principal actors in the following drama, to use strong language was unavoidable: but it is hoped, nothing will occur, that can offend the ear of female delicacy: the wrongs of the fair sex, as more particularly countenanced by the popish religion, being his greatest abhor-

PREFACE.

rence, and, to administer to their pleasure, his highest ambition.

This book may probably, in the opinion of many, bear some analogy, in different scenes and passages, to Mr. Lewis's celebrated Novel of the Monk: The Author can only say, that his system was laid down, and two thirds of the book written, before the MONK made its appearance.

THE LIBERTINES.

CHAPTER I.

“Hence motley mirth and wanton song,
That frisk in airy mood along,
Too rapt in bliss to hear a sigh!
Hence too, with these,
Self-soothing ease,
That feelst a tear unmov’d, and pass’st silent by!”

DYER'S ODE TO PITY.

ALEXO was carefully instructed by his uncle to revere the catholic religion; and the desire he felt at being witness to the splendid processions of the convents on festivals, gave his uncle great hopes, that he should one day be able to immure him in a monastery, and by that means totally deprive him of all intercourse with the world.—He lavished the highest encomiums on the munificence of the church and its members, expostulated with Alexo upon

its riches, and involved in his arguments the certainty of salvation for those who became God's agents for the administration of his blessings on earth. "The poor," said he, "receive alms and comfort from the institution, and the rich unbounded satisfaction from the pious exhortations of its members. Is it not, then, more consistent with reason, to obey the dictates of the heart, than sacrifice our reputation and lives at the shrine of intemperance? The midnight riot may command, from the influence of wine, a temporary pleasure; but a comfort of lasting effect is found only by the rational few, that follow the dictates of morality and religion."

This subtle argument produced the desired effect, and the young Alexo was initiated into the convent of St. Dominic, in the prime of life, and the meridian of gaiety and dissipation. Father St. Francis, a man esteemed universally for his benevolence and piety, was chosen the preceptor of our young friar. He exerted every

principle of instruction, to instil into his mind the moral obligations of men set apart from society for virtuous dispensations, and the promulgation of religious tenets: he also every evening read him lectures in his cell upon abstinence, and recommended the voluntary penance of the body, to quiet the torments of conscience. After having taught him the necessary lesson of obedience to the worm-eaten relics of different saints, and given him a rigid disgust at fleshly gratifications, he left him to fulfil the necessary functions of his office, as junior friar of the convent.

If the feelings of a man at twenty-one can ever be overcome by the rigid and ridiculous rules of a monastic life, I am sorry to say our young friar, at least, was not so happy as to effect it. He could not extricate himself from the fetters of nature and an education fitted for the world. He would often lament his solitary situation, and throw his crucifix on the ground in the height of anger and despair.

In his cell was a beautiful painting of the Virgin Mary; but the skill of the artist was lost, and adoration forgotten, when he sighed at midnight for the gay companions of those hours once devoted to mirth and dissipation.

One evening, as he mused in the solitary walks of the convent garden, he cursed the hour of his initiation, and broke into vehement and loud exclamations upon the frailty of human nature, and the venality of his professional confederates. "Why did I listen," said he, "to the artful, dissembling advice of Rodirego? Why did I so precipitately leave the seat of pleasure and luxury, for this abominable clothing and the food of superstition?—I will, I am resolved."

At that moment he discovered a friar musing in a walk overarched with high trees, that led to an hermitage at the bottom of the garden: apprehending he had overheard his exclamations, he retreated through the shrubbery into an adjoining

romantic arbour, and there secreted himself amidst the low shrubs that surrounded the spot from the prying eye of curiosity. It was the eve of St. Mark, and the day had been kept as a public festival and solemn confession by the monks.

He suffered the hour of midnight to approach, before he ventured from his hiding-place; and having smothered his face in his cowl, proceeded hastily to his cell. As he passed through the cloisters that led to the western door of the chapel, he discovered two men in an avenue adjoining, in private conference, and listened attentively to their conversation. They appeared from their gestures to be discussing a subject of momentous consequence.

This determined Alexo to know the result of their conference. He, therefore, managed to get as near them as possible without being detected; and his astonishment was beyond conception when he heard the crime of murder defended by the oldest

friar of the two, in the most horrid and sanguinary terms.

“ Murder,” said the monk, “ may be committed with propriety, when the moral character of the perpetrator is hazarded by the existence of the person possessed of a secret, the disclosure of which must inevitably be his ruin.”

A sigh proceeded from the other friar, accompanied with these words :

“ Alas! my brother, how shall we reconcile to our minds the reflection of the many happy hours we have spent in the company of the unhappy and unfortunate Amantha? Oh God! I should never rest after such an act of horrid and deliberate barbarity. You surely cannot justify such a proceeding. Amantha has not injured us.”

“ True,” exclaimed the grey-headed hypocrite; “ but has she not exposed the lady abbess to insult and contempt, her to whom I am devoted by the ties of un-

bounded affection?——She shall die to-night.”

“ Hold! hold! Father Jerome,” said De Carros; “ be not too precipitate : you may repent this temerity. Let us think of some way to dispose of her, less violent and impious than murder.”

“ Away, then,” exclaimed Jerome, “ away to your cell, and brood over the childish fears that would keep you from an act commanded by our religion and the laws of self-defence. Hence! hence! and remember, that although you may not assist in the execution of the deed, you will answer for acts of disaffection to our order. The good character you now command in the convent will avail but little ; for I will blast it with the force of my authority, and you shall suffer the punishment due to your cowardice.”

Here they separated ; when Jerome suddenly turned to Paul de Carros, the other monk, and again demanded his presence at the bloody act. He consented, but ap-

parently under the impresson of terror and the feelings of guilt. They proceeded with caution down an avenue in the garden, and passed through a private archway that led into the burying ground of the convent.

Alexo listened with anxiety near the spot for some time, but no sound of any kind was heard. Tired with fruitless watching, he was about to depart, when he heard footsteps approaching. He immediately secreted himself near a ruin, from which he perceived the friars advance, escorting a nun, who was clad in a deep black veil.

His mind was now strongly impressed with the piercing sensation of horror. The moon was sunk into the bosom of a dark cloud, and silence, as in death, reigned in every part of the solitude. And as he followed the friars through the gloomy walks of the garden, the sighs of the unfortunate female only were heard to mingle with the moaning of the night wind, as it swept along the avenues.

After some time they arrived at a private

door which led into the chapel, and which was open. The surprise of the friars at this unusual circumstance was beyond expression. They deliberated upon the consequences of entering the sanctuary in the presence of the person whom they supposed was at prayers. It was therefore determined that one should proceed and examine the chapel, whilst the other remained at the outer door.

“ Precious moments ! ” said Alexo ; “ why should I hesitate to fell this villain to the earth, and rescue from certain death this innocent and friendless victim ? Will God forgive the act ? I have been taught to love him for his goodness—to acknowledge his forgiveness to a repentant sinner. Why, then, should I doubt of his mercy for a deed of justice ?—Yes, he shall die.” And quickening his pace to where the friar stood, he had nearly gained the spot unobserved, when Jerome came from the chapel, and reported to his fellow, that no person was there, and he suspected the

porter had unintentionally forgot to lock the door.

Alexo hearing this, contrived to get into the chapel, whilst the friars were busied in satisfying their suspicion, by searching the adjoining avenues and places likely for concealment. The aisles were dark and solitary, which obliged Alexo to be careful in picking his way, lest he should be heard by the friars, who were approaching. He secreted himself behind a tomb until they had nearly reached the top of the middle aisle; when he perceived them go up to a small altar that stood in a remote niche of the gothic structure, and kneel down before it.

After muttering a few incoherent prayers, they took the female by the arm, and commanded her to kneel before the altar. She obeyed. They then ordered her to kiss her *agnus dei*, and pray for a remission of her sins, for that in a few minutes she would be no more.

Sighs and tears, accompanied with the

most pathetic entreaties, were the consequence of this order. She conjured them by their faith, and love of Almighty God, to spare her; for she was innocent of any crime they had to charge her with.

“Horrid idea!” cried Jerome: “thou knowest that the order would condemn us to the severest punishment, and the lady abbess to death, for violating the sacred laws of the institution, in suffering you to escape punishment merely for requesting it. No, no; thou must—Nay, thou canst not live.”

“Remember,” said she, “the professions you made when first I devoted my personal influence to your solicitations. Remember, when in religious conversation, how often you have stored my heart with the principle of mercy, and taught me to revere benevolence as the dawn of heaven on the mind! Spare me! Spare me! And whilst you brood over the consequences of a discovery, rely on my innocence for an acquittal. Reflect upon the act you are

about to commit—a deed of murder—a crime that never can be pardoned.”

Here she took a miniature painting from her bosom, and pressing it to her lips, shed over it a thousand affectionate tears. A clock was indistinctly heard in the distant turret.

“ Time passes,” exclaimed Jerome, “ and morning will appear before we can conceal the body.”

He drew the dagger from his belt; and as he raised his arm to plunge it in her bosom, Alexo groaned in the most terrific manner. The friar hesitated.

“ Are we not alone ?” said Jerome. “ I carefully surveyed the chapel, and found it totally free from human beings.”

“ That noise,” replied De Carros, “ must proceed from the spirit of some injured and avenging saint, whose name we have so repeatedly profaned, by using it in the prayers we are now on the point of violating, with the most deliberate act of barbarity.”

“ Idle thought !” exclaimed Jerome :

“ the disquietudes of the dead arise not from humane regard to the living, but from the souls enduring the pains of purgatory for some atrocious deed committed whilst in existence : the earth hides their bones, and repetition of mass, for the repose of the spirit every evening, surely must be sufficient. These are the dreams of imagination, the visionary effects of superstitious fear :—it was the hollow wind amongst the tombs. We will proceed.”

Again Alexo performed the office of a supernatural being, with sighs and groans.

“ I am convinced,” said Jerome, “ some prying fiend has secreted himself in the church. I will examine it. If he be mortal, death shall be the atonement of his curiosity : if supernatural, it is the business of fools and children only, to be alarmed at a passing shadow.”

He advanced so quick to the place of Alexo’s concealment, that he had not time to escape, and fell into the friar’s hands.

“ Ha, villain !” exclaimed Jerome, “ art

thou the suspected spirit? Dost thou presume to dispense the untimely warnings of the dead? Take the reward of your treachery."

He aimed a blow at Alexo with the dagger, but fortunately it only penetrated the sleeve of his habit. This circumstance allowed Alexo time to recover himself; and seizing the friar by the throat, he threw him on the ground.

During the scuffle, De Carros conveyed the lady from the church to his cell; and on his return he found Alexo had overpowered his antagonist, who was begging for mercy on the ground.

"Take it," cried Alexo: "take that, which you this moment denied to the unfortunate victim of your cruelty.—Excrutable old man! let the future hours of your life be devoted to penitence and contrition."

He hurried to the altar, but perceiving that De Carrros had decamped with Amantha, was about to leave the chapel in search

of her, when the friar appeared, and demanded the reason of his conduct.

"This church," said the monk, "is a sanctuary, the house of God, a place consecrated to devotion, and not for a display of our criminal passions in acts of blood."

"Detested hypocrite!" exclaimed Alexo; I will unmask you to the world. The church of Rome is no more than a consecrated asylum for the promoters of vice and murder; but the Holy Inquisition shall reward you."

"Hold!" said De Carros, "rash, intemperate youth! Reflect upon the consequences that must inevitably result from such conduct. The Holy Inquisition is a tribunal of opinion, and regards the order of St. Dominic too much to interfere with its members on the tale of a distempered brain: your folly will be rewarded with an exemplary punishment. Know that Jerome is one of the Secret Council of Reference. I warn you of the danger that threatens you. The punishments are dreadful. Go

to your cell, and attend to the duties of your profession, otherwise you will repent it."

Alexo was sensible of nothing but the effects of rage and disappointment, and rushing from the church, fled to his cell, under an anxiety of mind scarce to be described. After prayers in the morning, he retired into the solitudes of the garden, and deliberated on the best means to quit the convent. His own personal safety required such a step; and the desire of bringing to light the conduct of the friars, determined him to effect his escape from an order, supported by the frauds of religious villains.

"Is it thus," he exclaimed, "that Villany, cloaking itself in the garb of Religion, imposes upon the world? Damned, deceitful mercenaries! The public robber, comparatively, commands respect; his daring spirit of enterprise, and his crimes, are the effect of poverty and distress. But when the ministers of our church, these reputed bulwarks of the catholic faith, perpetrate

crimes too sanguinary for a savage,—these creatures of bigotry and indolence are justly execrated and abhorred by mankind.”

His mind was deeply impressed by these reflections; and, retiring to his cell, he wrote a letter to Francis, detailing the circumstances he was witness to in the church, and declared his intention of secretly withdrawing himself from the abbey.

In the evening he quitted the convent under the pretence of administering supreme unction to a dying man in the neighbourhood. Upon the gate closing, he offered up a prayer of thanksgiving for his liberty. He immediately went to the shop of a broker, that he formerly knew, and alledging that he had been at a masquerade, desired that he would wait upon him with a change of dress at a small inn over the way. The honest trader was soon announced, and the business completed. Being equipped in a plain suit of black, he went in search of his uncle. He

rapped at the door, but was surprised to find his house occupied by an honest pains taking taylor, who had retired from the labours of the needle, and lived upon the fruits of his industry. This man assured him that his uncle was no longer an inhabitant of Madrid; but that from some suspicious circumstance, he knew not what, neither did he pretend to say, Roderigo had quitted the kingdom of Spain for that of Portugal. Struck with astonishment at the taylor's information, he plainly saw the motive that induced Roderigo to seclude him in a monastery. Fixed in a determination to find out the place of his uncle's retreat, and not having the means of satisfying his travelling expences into Portugal, he entered himself as a mule driver to a merchant who was on the point of setting out with a train of attendants for a mart in the province of Estremadura.

Alexo was missed at vespers, and inquiry being made of the porter by Jerome, as to the time of his quitting the convent, and

the reason he assigned for it, he was convinced of the fraud, and proclaimed his conduct to the order. He also accused Alexo of an intention to murder him in the sanctuary of the church, which was confirmed by the testimony of De Carros. After a consultation amongst the senior friars, De Carros was dispatched to the Inquisition with a formal complaint, and an accusation of the pretended crime.

A council was immediately summoned, and an order issued for the apprehending of Alexo. It described his person so accurately, that he could not be mistaken. A paper of this sort was delivered to the host of the inn where Alexo was waiting to accompany the muleteers. It was circulated amongst his companions, who were carousing by the fire. They eagerly looked at the reward, and resolved upon searching for the criminal. Alexo had constantly avoided the company of these men, except when necessity required him to associate with them. He had often been observed

in a retired situation, with his arms folded, as in deep reflection : this circumstance gave rise to a suspicion that he was the person described in the hand-bill ; and, accordingly, an alguazil was sent for, and at night he was conveyed to the prison of the Inquisition. He was led through a variety of dark, damp, and winding passages, to a cell that was dimly lighted by a lamp suspended from the ceiling by an iron chain. His fare was nothing more than the common allowance of the prison. During the hours of his confinement, his conscience afforded him the required consolation under his misfortunes ; and when he reflected upon the advice given him by his preceptor, Father Francis, his heart yielded to the sensibility of nature, and a flood of tears succeeded the powerful influence of memory. After he had been confined near a week in this dreadful prison, he was ordered to an audience with the Grand Inquisitor, and at midnight the guards conducted him to a chamber hung with black, where he

found an old man sitting between two large silver crucifixes, and a secretary at the bottom of a long table. Being seated on a stool, the secretary began the list of accusations; the first was as follows :

FIRST ACCUSATION.

“ Don Alexo, a junior friar of the order of St. Dominic, is accused of having violated the laws of the Catholic Church, by entering a sanctuary at the dead of night, with an intent to murder the second Inquisitor of Reference.”

“ What sayest thou to this charge ?” asked the Inquisitor.

“ I deny it,” replied Alexo, in a firm and manly tone. “ The circumstances, so directly charged against me, are those that affect Jerome, my private accuser. He is the vilest of dissembling wretches, and deserves the punishment that he is endeavouring to inflict upon me. I beg leave to submit to your Lordship the cause that

urged Jerome to commit me to the prison of the Inquisition."

Alexo then told the whole of the proceedings in the church, the cause of the quarrel, and concluded with accusing Jerome, in the face of Heaven, of an intent to murder the nun.

Upon hearing his story, the Inquisitor sat for some time musing in his chair, when he ordered him back to his dungeon.

Several days passed with no other comfort than what arose from conscious innocence. Justice, he knew, was banished from the abominable tribunal, as the accused were uniformly convicted upon their own extorted confessions. One night, as he was endeavouring to destroy the reptiles that engendered in his dungeon, and prevented him from resting quietly, he found a board under his bed, that was loose.

He listened.—The footsteps of the centinels, as they paced along the passages, only disturbed the silence of the night.

meet again.' This somewhat alarmed and surprised me, but I took no notice of it to any person. About midnight there was a loud rap at the door : I started from my bed, and desired the servant to inquire who was there. The answer was,

“ The Holy Inquisition.

“ At these words, my senses forsook me, and I sunk in the arms of my servant : she shrieked, as the repeated raps at the door were followed by the threats of the officers. My mother, alarmed by this disturbance at so late an hour, came into my room, and, learning the cause, called from the window for them to depart. A voice, terrific in the extreme, cried out, ‘ Force the door ! force the door ! ’ It was immediately burst open, and four armed ruffians entered my chamber, seized both me and my mother, forced us into a coach, and carried us to the prison of the Inquisition”——

Here he heard the clanking of chains in the passage. He hastily concealed the papers, and expected every moment to be

On removing it, and searching with his hands under the floor, he found several sheets of paper carefully pinned together, which were deposited near a linen cloth, that contained the mouldering fragments of a child. He was seized with a cold shivering, on discovering these awful testimonies of cruelty. He returned the cloth, as he had found it, into the hole, and sat down on his bed to peruse the manuscript. It contained the following

HISTORY OF
DONNA CLEANTHE.

“ One day, as I was drinking tea with my mother in Madrid, Father Jerome, of the Dominican convent, entered the room, and joined us in conversation. He was my mother’s confessor ; for since the precipitate flight of my father from the malice of his enemies, he appeared to deserve our confidence. But, when he retired in the evening, he whispered, as he passed me, in a kind of insidious manner, ‘ We shall soon

dragged before the Grand Inquisitor; but the noise soon subsided, and he resumed the narrative.

“ On entering this dreadful prison, my mother was conducted to a dungeon, and I was led to a most splendid apartment. After passing some time alone in the chamber, a female, apparently a domestic of the prison, entered the room, and desired that I would sit down, and take some refreshment. Chocolate was brought by a person in a mask, and she entreated me to taste it. I refused,—and conjured her to tell me the reason of my imprisonment, and how long it was to last. ‘ Bless me!’ she cried; ‘ imprisonment! why, my dear creature, this is a palace, and not a prison. You are in the chambers of Don Jerome, a friar of St. Dominic, and an Inquisitor of great note; he is a man universally beloved, and possessed of unlimited powers.’—— ‘ Don Jerome!’ I repeated, with horrid surprise. ‘ Yes,’ replied Nerissa, ‘ Don Jerome. You know him, then, Ma-

‘dam?’ ‘O yes!’ I exclaimed, in a torrent of tears, ‘too well—an abandoned, ‘detestable villain.’ ‘Hush, hush!’ she cried, ‘for the sake of Christ and his Virgin Mother, do not speak so loud; if you ‘do, death will certainly be your fate.’— ‘Good God!’ I exclaimed, ‘what do you ‘mean?’

‘Oh! my dear Madam,’ she whispered, ‘I will shew you all to-night; but pray do ‘as you are bid, or certain death will be ‘the consequence.’

“I obeyed Nerissa’s directions, and remained silent, until the appointed time for an explanation of her mysterious allusion. The long wished for hour of midnight at length arrived, and Nerissa rapped gently at my chamber door. By the light of a small lamp, which she carried in her hand, I followed her in perfect silence through a range of dark galleries, until we arrived at a small iron door. She opened it with a key that she took from her pocket, and we descended a few steps into a room that was

hung with black tapestry, descriptive of the punishments in hell, as recorded in fabulous history. She then said, ‘ Here, Madam, are the instruments of torture :’ and holding up the lamp, I discovered a large brass pan over a furnace, on which was this inscription—

‘ THE PUNISHMENT FOR HERETICS,
‘ AND PERSONS DISOBEYING THE ORDERS
‘ OF THE HOLY INQUISITORS.’

‘ In this pan,’ said she, ‘ the poor creatures
‘ are locked down, and reduced to ashes by
‘ a slow fire.’ We then went into an adjoining room, where an horizontal wheel was placed, covered with large thick boards. She opened a small door at the bottom, and bade me look in ; when I saw that its whole circumference was armed with sharp razor blades, tenter hooks, and bits of old saws. —She then led me into another room. ‘ Here,’ said she, ‘ is the worst punishment
‘ of all.’ This was a large pit, filled with

poisonous reptiles. At the light of the lamp the snakes erected their crests, and hissed aloud, in the most terrific manner. ‘ They cannot be hungry,’ she cried; ‘ for they had an obstinate lady, who would not consent to sleep with our superior, only last night.’ At these words, and surrounded by so many instruments of cruelty, I had fainted, but from the admonitions of Nerissa to support myself until I reached my chamber. As we passed through the gallery, the cries of some unfortunate victim, expiring upon the rack, reached our ears. The clock tolled one, and the clank of heavy chains was heard below. ‘ Quick, quick,’ she cried, ‘ or we shall be discovered.’——

The noise of footsteps was heard approaching his dungeon, and Alexo again concealed the narrative. The door soon after opened, and a man appeared, who desired Alexo would follow him to the audience chamber. When he arrived there, he was astonished to find Jerome, his im-

placable enemy, seated as Inquisitor, and De Carros as his secretary at the bottom of the table. He demanded of Alexo why he so daringly added a calumny to a declaration of innocence, founded in falsehood.

“And is my accuser,” said he, “to sit in judgment upon me? Is this the mode of conducting the trial of an unfortunate man, without friends or assistance from the department of the law? I will never, at the hazard of my life, depart from my resolution of not answering any question put to me by the officers of this tribunal.”

“Son,” replied Jerome, “you may repent such an inconsiderate vow: when you talk of assistance from the department of the law, I beg leave to say, that this most holy institution is not regulated by the law. To suffer a criminal to plead in his defence, would be too tedious, and incompatible with the regular mode of our proceedings.”

Alexo then launched out into a strain of violent invective against the Inquisition

and all its supporters : he even went so far as to arraign the King at the bar of justice for suffering such hellish torturers to exist.

“ Were I in power,” he exclaimed, “ I would wash away this national calamity, this bloody stain upon the fair records of humanity, this blasphemous cloak of hypocrisy and superstition. Oh God! how long are these enemies to the peace and happiness of mankind to overwhelm the earth with the sacred tears of innocence and virtue? When will the fiery bolts of thy avenging wrath alight upon these grey-headed persecutors?”

“ Take him to the rack,” cried Jerome, whose eyes and gestures spoke the consummate villany of his heart, “ take him to the rack.”

“ Pass on,” replied Alexo, “ pass on; I’ll follow you, with the firm reliance that God will revenge my death.”

As he was retiring between the guards, a sudden confused noise was heard in the audience chamber; and, on learning the

cause, he found that Jerome had fallen into a violent convulsive fit: his punishment was therefore of necessity deferred, and he was reconducted to his dungeon. After trimming the lamp, and tasting a little water that was in a pitcher on his table, he sat down upon his bed, and concluded the narrative.

“ I followed her into my chamber, and throwing myself upon a bed, burst into a flood of tears. Nerissa reproved my despair, and assured me I should come to no harm, if I did not oppose the commands of Don Jerome. It was now near the hour of day-break, and a bell in an adjoining room rang with great violence. At this signal, Nerissa instantly disappeared, and from a small closet in the room Don Jerome entered, in his slippers and night gown. He fell at my feet, and spoke in the most extravagant terms of love and friendship: he declared his passion for me, with all the ardour of a young and anxious lover, and begged the consummation of his desires that night.

—My heart was torn with convulsive and agonizing throbs. Overwhelmed with horror, I entreated him to abandon so corrupt and wicked a design, and leave me to solitude and tears.—He flattered me, and attempted to caress me.—I pushed him from me with disdain; and labouring under the most violent sensations of disgust and horror, I demanded to know the fate of my mother. He told me she was at liberty, but that I was detained for the purposes he before explained to me; and unless I complied with his request, the most dreadful punishments awaited me. I turned from him with looks of horror; but as he was quitting the apartment, apparently with indignation, I flew after him, and endeavoured by my tears and supplications to move him to pity. He looked at me with scornful contempt, and forcing me from him, left me upon the floor in a state of insensibility. When I had in some measure recovered my senses, I rose from the ground, and staggered to a chair near the bed, where I

indulged myself with the hope that God would extend his merciful protection to the innocent. To describe the situation of my mind during the night, is impossible; I can only say, that I paced the room in melancholy distress until the approach of midnight: a bell then rang as before; I shuddered until a cold dew overspread every part of me—Nerissa at this moment entered the room—

‘ You must go,’ said she, as she placed her lamp upon the table, ‘ immediately to his bed.’

‘ Never!’ I exclaimed, maddened with despair.—‘ Great God of justice, whither can I fly for safety? Am I, an unoffending victim of oppression, to be sacrificed to lust and villany, without thy divine interposition?—Oh, my beloved Bertram! if some angel could transport thee here for my protection.’——

“ Nerissa interrupted me, and entreated me to obey his mandate. I repeated my

vows, before a crucifix that stood upon a table in the room.

“ As I rose from kneeling at the cross, a tall man entered the chamber. I shrieked aloud, and grasped Nerissa by the arm. He forced us asunder, and wrapping me in his cloak, instantly conveyed me to the chamber of Jerome.

“ I was followed by two females, bearing waxlights and baskets of flowers; vases of delicate perfumes were burning in the chamber, and a strain of soft music was instantly succeeded by several voices chanting, as I suppose, an epithalamium. After insulting me with the sacred appellation of bride, they strewed the flowrets upon the carpet, and led me to the bed-side. The curtains drew back, and the monster appeared robed as a sultan: he caught me in his arms, and the females left the apartment. I shrieked aloud for protection.

“ At that instant a loud knocking was heard at the great gate of the prison, lights

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appeared in the court yard, and soon after the trampling of horses was heard. He rose from his bed, and looked out of the window. He returned apparently engaged in thought. I was instantly ordered back to my room; and on my way thither I inquired of Nerissa the reason for Jerome's conduct.

‘There is a great lord brought to the ‘Inquisition by the King’s guards,’ said she.

“After a few days had elapsed, I was again conducted to his chamber: he loaded me, by turns, with passionate admiration and inveterate curses; but finding it of no avail to attempt my dishonour by force, he threw me into this dungeon, swearing never to release me until I complied with his desires. Some months after this declaration he sent for me again.”——

[Here the narrative in a different handwriting was concluded.]

“And still resisting his damnable outrages, he, in the height of madness and re-

venge, drew a dagger from beneath his pillow, and plunged it in her heart. The body was thrown into the cellar of this prison, to moulder into dust amongst the many victims to his villany and oppression. The bones of the child found with this manuscript belong to Jurgutha, who murdered it privately in this dungeon."

From the letter N appearing at the bottom of the manuscript, Alexo concluded that Nerissa, the domestic mentioned in the tale, was the person who finished the narrative.

When Alexo had read this affecting story, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and, lying down upon his couch, wept over the sufferings of the unknown but lamented Cleanthe. After a pause of some minutes he exclaimed,

"It may be so. It may be suffered, to answer some wise and providential end.— But when we see from day to day these prosperous miscreants of oppression gathering to themselves wealth and power, and

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fattening upon the superfluous luxuries of the world, whilst the virtuous and friendless part of mankind are the victims of their premeditated plans for debauchery and cruelty, this fact militates against the avowed utility of religion; and the common benefit supposed to be derived from the craft of pulpit declamation, is nothing more than a delusion, to protect them from the suspicions of a discerning age. Oh Jerome! what an example for mankind dost thou afford? what a living instance of that pitch of depravity, which human nature is supposed to be capable of arriving at! What am I to expect from such a blood thirsty villain? Oh, my God! I seem to be deserted by man and thee." His reflections were disturbed by a gentle rap at the door of his dungeon; and, as he rose from his couch, it opened, when Father Francis, his aged and beloved preceptor, entered the room. Mutual sorrow for some time prevented them from speaking. At length the old man said,

“I have overheard you Alexo, and confess myself astonished that a mind like yours should so soon yield to the unmanly dictates of despair. Oh! my Son, I conjure you as a father, a friend, to hear me.—The Catholic faith”—

“I abjure it, father!” exclaimed Alexo vehemently, “I abjure it. The principles of what you call the holy catholic faith are themselves the foundation of our most egregious errors; they infuse into the mind a system of gloomy bigotry, and inculcate the horrid and pernicious doctrine of persecution. I love the sacred laws of religious toleration; they are too nearly allied to all that is dear to man to be violated by catholic hypocrisy, or the fanaticism of any sect that exists upon the face of the earth.”

“Hush, hush!” said Francis, “talk not so loudly and violently about the catholic faith. The guards listen at the door, by order, when any friend enters a dungeon to speak to the prisoner. I come to release

you from this horrid place, to conduct you to our convent."

"Father, I am fixed in my determination, never to enter the walls of that detested sanctuary again, The letter I left upon your table, and this melancholy tale, are my reasons for denying your request,"

He gave the manuscript to Francis, and hid his face in his cloak to hide the sorrows of his heart.

When the friar had perused it a little way, his lips were pale; tears gushed from his eyes as he glared round the room, and, when he folded the papers, an involuntary trembling had nearly deprived him of his senses.

"Gracious heaven! said Alexo, what does this mean? You are unwell, father."

He produced his warrant of liberty from the Grand Inquisitor.

"Accompany me home to the convent," said he.

The friar's unaccountable distress struck Alexo with some degree of astonishment,

and, anxious to satisfy himself respecting the cause of it, he hastily concealed the cloth containing the bones of the infant under his cloak, and assisted his deliverer, from the gloomy and terrific dungeons of the Inquisition, to the convent of St. Dominic.

CHAPTER II.

“ But, Oh ! what form of prayer
 “ Can serve my turn ? Forgive me my foul murder ! ”

HAMLET.

JEROME was conveyed from the audience chamber to his own private apartments in the prison, where he passed the night alone. He was continually agitated by the horrors of reflection, and an irresistible watchfulness seemed to hang upon his senses. About the hour of one a noise, as of some person ascending a staircase, was distinctly heard. He started, and, raising his head gradually from his pillow, heard a voice utter, in a mournful tone—

“ Oh, Francis ! Francis ! what a crime hast thou to answer for. Murderer of Catherine ! ”

“ What can this mean ? ” he exclaimed.

At that instant a sigh was heard, as from

one in deep distress, when the words were again repeated.

He laid in a state of piercing anxiety until the light of day beamed in at the chamber window, when he rose immediately from his bed, and taking the lamp that was yet light upon the table, opened the door of a closet, from whence the voice seemed to proceed, and after a strict search, discovered a trap door, before unknown to him.

He lifted it up and descended a flight of decayed stone steps into a vault, where he perceived the mouldering relics of human beings, and one in particular that appeared from its state of putrefaction, to have been thrown in but a few days. It was the body of a young beautiful female, and Jerome naturally concluded that it must be the murdered Catherine. Retiring hastily from the vault, he carefully fastened the closet door, and left the prison for his convent. When he reached his cell, he meditated upon the means he had discovered of gratifying his revenge

against Francis. His hatred had become implacable; for as soon as Francis received Alexo's letter, he kept a strict watch upon the private steps of Jerome and De Carros, and ordered no person to be seen in the church after a certain hour, upon the pain of expulsion. He also summoned the two friars to a private conference, and insisted on the liberation of Alexo, as the only means of saving them from an accusation. This was complied with. But Jerome alleged, that as the Grand Inquisitor had appointed an audience with Alexo, he would go down himself, lest any thing should happen to him; but he went for the express purpose of torturing Alexo previous to his liberation; his diabolical intention was, however, frustrated.

Jerome attended, as usual, to his professional avocations, and with uplifted eyes poured forth the cant of hypocrisy to the crucifix. He called on the Holy Virgin to cover him with mortal blessings, and tried to convince her of the purity of his heart,

in all the solemnity of sanctimonious prayer. Having concluded his orisons, he set out in search of De Carros, who advised with him upon the immediate disclosure of the circumstance relating to Catherine, as the best and most effectual method of destroying their enemy: but Jerome was guided by his own opinion, and resolved to retain the secret until a favourable opportunity offered to discover it.

“ And where is Amantha ? ” he cried.

“ I have conveyed her,” answered De Carros, “ to a dungeon under the chapel of St. Catherine’s, by permission of the abbess.”

“ That is well,” exclaimed Jerome ; “ she is safe, and Francis in our power.”

“ Ah, Jerome ! ” said De Carros, “ his severity against us will now be punished ; we have him secure ; his death shall be the price of our just revenge.”

When they had concluded their deliberations, they went to communicate to the lady abbess of St. Catherine’s (who was

also a determined and inveterate enemy of Francis), the discovery of the murder, and their intended plan of delivering up Francis to the power of the Inquisition.

They proceeded through the subterraneous passage that led to the monastery, and gained the cell of Biffare by a private staircase that communicated with the chapel. Upon their explaining the subject of their visit, her joy on the occasion exceeded all bounds. She entered into the conspiracy with rapture, and embraced them in the transports of lascivious delight. "Let us hide that monster in the tomb," said she, "and we need not fear another enemy to to our happiness. But where is Amantha, De Carros?"

"In the cell," he replied.

"How long is it since you was there?" said the abbess; "for I have just been, and found the cell empty. I fear she has escaped."

"Escaped!" exclaimed Jerome. "Hell and confusion!"

“ Alas!” said the abbess, “ I judge only from circumstances; the door of her cell was open, and the lamp gone.”

Every avenue, cell, and solitary dungeon was searched in vain. Amantha had fled from the hands of her persecutors, and was no where to be found. This circumstance aided in a great degree to confirm Jerome’s opinion, that he was visited by supernatural agents, commissioned to perplex and torment him. He laid strict injunctions on the abbess to give him notice when the retreat of Amantha was discovered, that he might immediately dispatch her and run no farther risque of a discovery.

Francis and Alexo, after quitting the Inquisition, soon reached the convent, where they retired together into the father’s cell, and Alexo recounted to the friar his sufferings in the prison, and the accidental discovery of the manuscript. On producing the cloth with the bones of the infant, he said,

“ It was wrapped in this, father.”

“ Execrable monster ! ” exclaimed Francis, “ he shall meet the reward of his villainy.—‘ This murderer ’——As he uttered this word, big drops stood upon his forehead, and he sunk upon the ground.

Alexo was struck with astonishment. He raised him from the floor, and seated him in a chair. On his recovery, he desired to be by himself.

“ You will,” said he, “ lock up the manuscript and other testimonies, in that small cabinet, that they may be safe, and leave me to myself for a few hours: I am ill, and wish for repose.”

Alone and in solitude, Francis deeply reflected upon the enormity of the crime he ordered to be perpetrated, to save his moral character from the justice of an impeachment. The subject of this horrid transaction was a nun, who frequently came to confession at the friar’s cell. She was beautiful and engaging in her manners, and attentively pursued the advice of her preceptor in every instance. Secluded from

the world, and so often in possession of a treasure desirable and adored, Francis forgot the duties of his profession, and instigated by a secret and powerful influence of the passions, he continually instilled into the mind of his pupil the exquisite delight of illicit connections, the wisdom and innocence of such proceedings, and usually concluded with a declaration, that nature, admitting it to be under the controul of God, ought not to resist its own creative powers of delight. He was successful in the effect of his deceitful arguments; and one fatal day the lovely and innocent Catherine was seduced by this abandoned man under the cloak of a pious resignation to the will of her Creator. Some time after, being called to the superior's chair of the order of St. Dominic, he discovered Catherine was pregnant. Necessity has no law: he was obliged to get rid of her, and in such a way that would keep her friends and the world in ignorance. He therefore resolved, after some deliberation, to send her

to the Inquisition, with express orders for her immediate death. This rash determination was instantly put in execution, and the unfortunate and disconsolate parents could only mourn in private over the loss of their unhappy child. An inquiry concerning her fate would have been fatal to them; for the power of Francis was great, and they feared his revenge. Francis read the History of Cleanthe with the feelings of a man labouring under the burning pains of a disturbed conscience. He looked at the mouldering fragments of the infant with a degree of horror that almost bordered upon madness. He kissed the crucifix, but it had no effect. He prayed for the mercy of his God, but he seemed deserted. He could not reconcile in the moments of deliberate reflection the design of accusing Jerome, from a self conviction of his own impurity. But when he looked upon him as the enemy of Alexo, and his rival in the convent, he determined upon discovering to the world the impious transaction of

Jerome. When the night was far advanced he left his cell, and entering the western cloisters went towards the apartment of Alexo. From a small door that led into a subterraneous passage which communicated with caverns where the dead mouldered into dust, he saw two friars ascend with great caution. On closing the door of the vault, they extinguished the lamp which one of them carried ; but as they hurried past the place where he had secreted himself, he discovered them to be Jerome and De Carros. When they had disappeared, Francis proceeded to the cell of Alexo, who was asleep on his couch, but he rose immediately he heard his voice at the door to admit him. He was unacquainted with his crimes ; but the agitation of his frame, his eyes swollen with tears, his pale and haggard countenance, convinced him that the mind of Francis was the prey of some private misery. He endeavoured in vain to discover the real cause of his grief ; Francis evaded his questions with the most art-

ful suspicion; and frequently referred to different passages in the manuscript, as acts of the most horrid cruelty, purposely to avoid a conversation that did not tend to tranquilize his mind.

Alexo demanded whether he intended to proceed against Jerome?

Francis discovered some symptoms of fear, and said, that he thought he should be able to find out the relations of the deceased, and a public accusation from them would be more effectual, than from him.

“ I am satisfied, father, with this determination,” said Alexo, “ and feel confident that I leave in the hands of a faithful friend, the only means of bringing a villain to punishment. Early to-morrow morning I shall bid a last adieu to this detestable sanctuary, for persecution, debauchery, and murder. I had rather wander through the world in indigence and misery, than become the unprovoked foe of innocence and virtue. Your most holy catholic religion I dis-

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claim; the feelings of my own heart shall be the revealed religion of Alexo. If I never see thee more, father, be careful and preserve the manuscript and fatal relics that I have entrusted to you.

Early in the morning Alexo quitted the convent, and having been furnished with some money by Francis, strolled about the streets of Madrid, until the hour of dinner arrived, when he went into an ordinary of some repute. A little time after he was seated, an old gentleman came to the same table, and accosted him in terms of politeness. They entered into conversation, and Alexo soon discovered that he was a country steward to a rich jew in the metropolis. Alexo endeavoured to profit by this hint, and ingratiated himself with the steward. His wishes succeeded, and the old gentleman promised to assist him in procuring for him the place of tutor to the jew's son, who was on the point of setting out on his travels into Portugal.

“ This is the very thing,” said Alexo ;
“ but when may I expect to hear from you
again ?”

“ To morrow morning,” replied Pedro ;
“ the hour and place of appointment you
will find on that card.”

He put it into the hand of Alexo, and
wished him a good day.

Alexo was punctually at the place ap-
pointed, and soon after old Pedro arrived.

“ I have succeeded,” he cried, “ in every
request beyond my most sanguine expecta-
tions ; the jew will admit you into his house,
and maintain you like a grandee, until his
son, whom he expects every day, shall arrive
from the university, and then you are to set
out for Portugal. But there are many traits
in his character, that you must be informed
of ; you will pardon my trespassing upon
your time and patience by repeating them.”

Alexo bowed respectfully.

“ I must know then, in the first place,
what religion you are of ?”

"I cannot tell, for I have no name for mine," replied Alexo.

"So much the better," said Pedro, "for the jew is the most notorious vagabond in that respect, that ever breathed. He is also a jew christian; that is to say, he eats fat pork for his Friday's supper, and calls it forbidden venison; the tribe are afraid it is the forerunner of his becoming a proselyte. In the next place he keeps an old, ugly, ill-tempered, deformed woman, to dress his victuals, and rub his back with flannel and salt at the fall of the leaf. Never mention the devil in his presence: not that he is frightened at the bugbears of his horns, cloven feet, barbed tail, and flaming pitchfork; but he says very judiciously, that the worst principle in human nature is, endeavouring to make unnecessary enemies; he therefore avoids affronting this mighty potentate; talk to him about that bearded patriarch the wandering jew, and if you try to trace a relationship, you will never want his friendship."

"You may depend," said Alexo, "upon my observing your directions."

"Then," replied Pedro, we will take a bit of cold fowl, and go immediately to his house."

After he had gorged the major part of a delicate pullet, and swallowed down a pint of most excellent wine, he desired Alexo to pay the bill, and they then set out for the jew's house. Traversing several dirty streets, they at length arrived at a small house in a dark court yard, at the extremity of a long narrow lane. Pedro rapped at the door. An old woman opened a grate, and on seeing him, exclaimed,

"Odds, my wits, is it you?"

The door was instantly unbarred, and they were ushered into a hall that resembled the common room for prisoners in a county goal. The spiders were at work in every corner, and three starved cats lay stretched before a small fire. The jew was soon made acquainted with their arrival, and he ordered them up stairs. Alexo was introduced

by Pedro to the old gentleman, who was writing at a table in a large folio book, his beard had grown to a formidable length, and his frowns appeared the effect of age. He received Alexo by a nod of his head, but spoke not on any subject, until supper; he then told him to eat, and after he had finished his supper he might retire. He rang a bell, when the old woman appeared with a lamp, and conducted him into a desolate and gloomy apartment. The old tapestry was fallen into total decay, and the wind whistled through the ruined wainscot

“ In shrill and melancholy tones.”—

He examined the bed, but found that the furniture corresponded with the room. His mind was now harassed with unpleasant reflections; he knew that Jerome's malice would assist him in the commission of any crime, and suspected he was betrayed into his hands. He cursed Pedro in his heart, lamented his own imprudent credulity, and expecting he was betrayed into the

hands of some unprincipled villain, gave himself up for lost.

As he sat wrapt in the gloom of reflection, he heard a clock in some neighbouring tower strike the hour of midnight, a time usually dreadful to the wanderings of a disturbed imagination; he felt himself inclined to sleep:

“ But if I am buried in repose,” said he, “ the villains may dispatch me without trouble.”

At this instant he heard people talking rather loud in the adjoining room; he listened attentively to their conversation, and from what he could collect, he found them to be discussing the merits of a robbery, which one of them had committed that night. As he stood in silent astonishment and fear, he perceived a ray of light glimmer through a crevice in one of the dark oak pannels of the wainscot; he lost no time in satisfying his curiosity, and on looking through the aperture, he saw two armed men eagerly watching a monk, who

was weighing with great accuracy a quantity of old embossed plate; amongst which he observed several censers, crucifixes, and consecrated candlesticks. A noise as of persons ascending the stairs was heard ere the villain had finished his business.

“Quick,” said he to the thieves, “escape into this closet.”

They had scarce closed the door, when three ruffians entered the apartment, bearing the body of a well dressed cavalier in their arms. When they laid their masks upon the table, the brutal malice which appeared to envelope their countenances, fully illustrated their characters,

“Sanguinary, cruel, and rapacious.”

They nodded assent with their heads when the monk laid his finger on his lips, as a signal for silence; and began stripping the body of the unfortunate stranger, which they soon after conveyed from the room, preceded by the monk who carried a lamp.

Alexo during the remainder of the night

experienced the most poignant sensations of horror and distress, and as the hoarse murmurs of the wind mingled with the rattling of the decayed casement, he started with involuntary dread: for anticipating his fate, he heard the sound as a prophetic warning of his murderers' approach.

He had accidentally, when he left his order, brought away with him a book of little poems, which belonged to the convent library: he often lamented the indiscretion, but he now found it an inestimable treasure. He had in his leisure moments marked the most admired pieces in the work, and from one of that number I copy the following

ODE TO MEDITATION.

Oh! guide me to some moonlight glade,
 To rural ways, or silent shade,
 Where silver streams o'er beds of amber flow;
 To hear the merry bells, or shepherd's lute,
 That cheer the sylvan scene when all is mute,
 Averting oft the secret powers of woe.
 Attend me, as the setting day
 The western hills with varied light illumines,
 And, on the battlements of ruin near,

The lonely redbreast sings a farewell lay ;
 For then I love to pace the grass-worn way
 Thro' churchyard dim, and midst the mould'ring
 tombs

To drop the sacred tribute of a tear.

But when the funeral hymn is heard to swell
 Along the twilight pathway on the gale,
 Then meet me in some fainted pile,
 Where gloomy horror seems to smile,
 And glim'ring tapers cast a feeble light
 Upon the sculptur'd mansions of the dead—
 Dark seat of silent melancholy.

Or if I seek yon gloomy spreading yew,
 When death birds pierce with shrieks the ear of night,
 To weep beside misfortune's cold death bed,
 O'ergrown with deadly weeds of fable hue,
 Teach me to feel the sorrows that I mourn
 Of those departed ; let the breath of folly
 Taint not the mind with thoughts unholy,
 But, as with inspiration fraught, its powers display,
 Whilst Friendship bends to kiss the hallow'd clay.

Sublimely when the bosom of the ocean swells,
 And billows onward roll with hideous roar,
 Lashing with idle rage th' impending steep,
 Then let me feel the impulse of thy power,
 In sea-worn cliffs, or hollow winding dells,
 That echo the wild howlings of the deep,
 And the loud groan of misery,
 The sea bird's scream, and lover's frantic cry —
 As sinks the shatter'd bark deep in the foaming tide.

One night, after having watched in vain for the arrival of the monk and his bloody associates, he ventured to lay down upon his couch and try to refresh himself with a few hours repose. He had scarce closed his eyes, when he heard a female with a voice of exquisite melody fingering to a lute. The air was plaintive, and the song expressed the sorrows of misfortune. "Where am I?" he cried, frantic with distress: "to what a place has this execrable villain Pedro transported me? Every night I discover fresh circumstances that convince me, it is the resort of rapine and murder. That lovely stranger, who mourns her fate in such sweet enchanting melody, perchance is the victim of Jerome's cruelty. I would that I could assist her."

In the transports of his passion, he ran to the door and endeavoured to force it open, but the old duenna had carefully and effectually guarded against such an attempt. He sat for some time listening for a repetition of the song, but he heard it no more.

In the morning he was summoned by the jew to his chamber. When he appeared, the old man was writing at a table, and a friar in a grey habit was sitting by his side. On finishing a letter he delivered it to the friar, who left the room. The jew then expatiated largely on the virtue and abilities of his confessor, as he styled him, and proposed that Alexo should apply to him for letters of recommendation to his monastic friends in Portugal; but this Alexo declined, and the jew did not press it. Alexo now was convinced that Pedro had betrayed him into the hands of a villain, and expected nothing but a violent death for his credulity. About an hour before dinner the long looked for son was announced. He was received with apparent affection by the old man, and formally introduced to Alexo. His face was of a malignant rough cast, and his height gigantic. He was booted, and wore a long black cloak, which he threw open without thought when he entered the room, and with the greatest horror Alexo

discovered a large sabre suspended from a girdle, in which he carried a brace of pistols and a dagger. A general conversation took place, and the son appeared to know a great deal of the world, but was very ill bred; besides this circumstance, Alexo was surprised to see a student of the university of Salamanca equipped like a robber, or a traveller that was entering a forest in Germany. He soon discovered his principles from the secret signs which by accident he saw pass between him and the jew, who was disconcerted at his coming into the room armed. In the evening Alexo and his pupil considered the best route to Almeida, the town of their destination, and having fixt upon it, retired to rest. Early in the morning, Gaspardo (for that was his name) held a private conference with the jew, and, as Alexo supposed, received his final instructions; for about five o'clock the mules were ordered to the door, and the pupil with his tutor set out for the kingdom of Portugal.

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CHAPTER III.

“ Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That dar’st, though grim and horrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way ?”

MILTON.

IN the convent garden of St. Dominic were groves, fashioned by the ingenuity of man with such peculiar romantic beauty, that no spot, even by nature wild and solitary, could afford a more enchanting resort for those who loved to indulge the powers of contemplation, or the secret pleasures of melancholy in the gloom of solitude.

To one of these sacred walks did Francis retire at midnight, buried in deep reflection. He seated himself beneath the luxuriant branches of a cedar, that grew by the side of a beautiful rivulet, and taking the bones of the infant which Alexo had left with him from his pocket, he surveyed them with a degree of distracting horror, too powerful for description.

“ If there are punishments beyond the grave,” he exclaimed, “ severer than the torments I now endure, to die, is but to plunge deeper in the gulph of misery. What! if I doubt the truth of this opinion ?”—

Almost stupified with the excess of grief, the friar rose from his seat, and wandered he knew not whither : as he turned into a solitary walk of towering limes, a form passed him, to all appearance the phantom of Catherine. He stood almost motionless with horror near the spot for a few minutes, when the sound of music floated upon the breeze, and, as it died away, he heard a voice chaunt the following lines :

“ Much sorrow, misery, and woe
Attend the wicked. For the deed
Thy tears will never cease to flow,
Thy heart will never cease to bleed ;
But you will languish life away,
In anguish, horror, and dismay.”

He had read of spirits, and warning voices heard at midnight by villains ; and, impressed with the truth of this idea, he precipitately left the garden ; for those lonely walks, once his favourite haunt, when philosophy and contemplation broke in upon his hours of rest, now terrified him with their sacred solemnity and silence ; and the man, who of late was the idol of his brotherhood, became at once the prey of an insupportable misery, flowing from the horrors of a guilty conscience.

Ere the matin bell had ceased, he joined the monks in the chapel ; but his air and manner bespoke the disorder of his mind. At the conclusion of the service, he retired to his cell, and, throwing himself on his couch, endeavoured, by a few hours repose, to lose the remembrance of his crime, and soothe, if possible, the aching of an oppressed and despairing heart.

Scarce had he closed his eyes, when Jerome rapped at his door, and desired to speak with him : he tried to dissemble his

distress, and receive the friar's visit without emotion, but in vain; he was embarrassed, and faltered in his speech. Jerome, suspecting the cause of his confusion and distress to proceed from the severity of reflection, triumphed in his heart over the sorrows of his unfortunate rival.

Whilst Francis, from the manuscript in his possession, looked upon him as a murderer; Jerome, from the circumstantial evidence of Francis's guilt, charged him in his heart with the most subtle and cruel villany. Thus were two men, professionally set apart to administer consolation to the wretched, and virtuously to promulgate the principles of religion, slaves to the accursed influence of the most dissolute passion, secretly designing each other's destruction, and drenched with the blood of innocence.

It is a common, but judicious observation, that in the retired bosom of a convent the most odious vices are engendered and brought to maturity. Hypocrisy is the dis-

cipline of their schools, and encouraging an universal credulity in the lower class of people for the support of idolatry, the monks become depraved, and the people fools. The principles of speculative theology are also employed to assist their artifice in procuring a superstitious and bigoted reverence for the persons and characters of those who support their delusive dreams of holiness. Seclusion from the world may in some measure guard the heart against the lust of the flesh; but many are so constitutionally formed, that the very idea of a beautiful woman lights up the fire of imagination to such a degree, that it counteracts every system that is formed to subvert the influence of the most tender and endearing of all the passions that lord it over the human mind. If one of these holy pillars of purity and abstinence feels the warmth of love animate his self-presumed frozen sensibility,

“What molten image,” he cries, “can

equal the loveliness of woman? for the charms of beauty, what tie resist the feelings of affectionate despair? Oh God! why was I born not to share this enjoyment in common with my fellow-creatures?" .

Then it is, that the busy fiends of iniquity assist his hypocritical prudence, and point to the security of his religious solitude, the sacred asylum of his cell, the prayer at midnight; all so convenient for the completion of his purpose, all so well calculated to shelter him from the raging and justly dreaded torrent of worldly abuse. The crime is common; but his religious character requires him to study an apposite conduct: and when he has rolled in voluptuous ecstasy, until the fiend, disgust, is master of his heart, the world again stares him in the face: it is then that the innocent victim of his lust and hypocrisy is disposed of, by the most sanguinary and barbarous means that lie within the limits of his villany: it is then that he prides himself upon his power, and, like the fallen

angel of old, triumphs in guilt, rebellious
and unholy,

“ Who with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in heaven, and battle proud,
With vain attempt.”——

In the evening a bell tolled as a signal for the monks of St. Dominic to assemble in the court yard, and proceed to the priory of St. Catherine's. The gates were thrown open, and they went in solemn procession to the convent; crucifixes, tapers, relics, and devices were profusely distributed amongst the brothers, to excite awe, admiration, and respect in the populace.

In the croud that followed the procession two men, of despicable and ruffianlike appearance, were observed by many of the monks to pay particular attention to Father Francis, continually pushing forward to look at him, and then whispering to each other, with designing and ambiguous countenances.

As they drew near the gate of the priory,

the lady abbess came out to meet them: she was followed by the nuns, chanting a soft requiem for the dead. The sight was grand and affecting, in the extreme. On entering the monastery, the two ruffians that so particularly watched Francis pressed forward, as if to speak to him; but they were prevented from following the procession into the convent yard, by the great gates closing upon them.

As Francis was standing in the great square of the building, the abbess accosted him in seeming terms of politeness and respect.

“ Indeed, father,” said she, “ we are unfortunate in not having you for one of our confessors; the piety of Father Jerome, and the consolation we derive from his advice, is, to be sure, a great blessing to us; but with the addition of your religious exertions, our convent would indeed become popular.”

“ I thank you,” replied Francis; and, stepping forward, requested the ceremony

they were called upon to perform might begin. It consisted of extemporary prayers by Jerome, and funeral dirges by the whole congregation, in honour of the miraculous disappearance of Jurgutha, a nun belonging to the order, and of whom it was believed that an angel, witnessing her supreme piety, had carried her to heaven in the night.

The symbol of her flight to the realms of peace was consecrated by Jerome with the most ridiculous fervency, and deposited in a sacred chest with the other precious relics of ancient superstition. Her cell was ordered to be inhabited by sister Melissa, and to be held sacred, so that no footsteps but Melissa's ever after entered the apartment.

During the ceremony, Francis continued in deep reflection; for his thoughts were occupied too much with the mysterious adventure in the solitudes of the garden, to attend to the exhortations of Jerome: but when the requiem for the dead was

fung, he felt a sudden coldness steal over him, his heart throbbed, as if bursting in his bosom, and a flood of tears poured down his haggard and emaciated countenance.

When the ceremony was concluded, the monks returned in procession to the convent, but Francis secretly stole into the cemetery of St. Catherine's, and wandered amongst the tombs.

He had not been long in this situation, before he heard the same voice that the night before had astonished him in the solitude. He looked around, but the darkness prevented him from discovering the unknown. After a pause of some minutes, music stole upon the silence of the night. Hastily quitting the cemetery, he followed the sound to the western aisle of the chapel, where he discovered a nun seated in a melancholy posture at the foot of a small monument, which he knew was a cenotaph; her hair hung wildly over her shoulders,

and a chaplet of chrystal beads suspended from her neck a large and beautiful cross of amber.

From a motive of sincere pity that glowed in his bosom, he was desirous to learn the cause that induced the nun to visit at midnight a tomb which did not contain the ashes of the departed, but was merely erected in honour of the dead. He approached the spot whilst the unfortunate was indulging her sorrows with her face buried in her bosom.

“ Daughter,” said he, in an affectionate tone, “ if a holy brother of St. Dominic can restore comfort to thy heart, and relieve by his admonitions ”——

At this instant she raised her veil slowly from her face, and surveying the monk with a dejected and despairing countenance, pointed to the monument, and fled along the aisle, uttering disconsolate and piercing shrieks. He took the lamp she had left upon the ground, and surveyed the tomb. No language can express his

horror, his confusion, his distress, when he read the following words :

“ To the memory of
CATHERINE,

Daughter of Don JUAN DE CASTILLAS,
who was hurried, in the meridian of youth and beauty,
to the grave.

Her disconsolate friends have erected
this monumental tablet, to perpetuate the memory of
a beloved and only child.

Peace be with her spirit!”

“ Amen,” cried the terrified monk,
“ Amen.”

He dropt the lamp upon the ground,
and fled immediately from the chapel into
the cloisters, from whence he gained the
street unobserved.

The night was very dark ; and as he hurried to his convent, he was met by the two men that followed him to the gates of the nunnery, with such suspicious and inquiring conduct.

“ We request,” said one, “ your assistance, father, to hear the confessions of a sinner, who lies at the point of death.”

The mind of Francis was unequal to the task of administering consolation to the wicked; but considering himself bound by his religious vows to assist the distressed in prayer, he put several questions to them concerning their request; and having satisfied himself respecting the truth of it, consented to go with them. They led him into a remote part of the city to a small cottage, and one of them taking a key from his pocket, opened the door, and conducted Francis to the bed side of the penitent. Being left alone in the sick man's room, he drew back the curtains, and discovered a pale, emaciated figure sitting upright in the bed. The man conjured the friar to use his religious power to the utmost limit, to procure him a remission of sins, and discovered to the priest a train of the most atrocious villanies that ever man committed. He concluded his history in the following words :

“ But the crime, father, that hangs the heaviest upon my conscience, is a murder.

I have told you that I was a torturer to the Most Holy Inquisition: and one night a lady of exquisite beauty was brought to me by a friar in a mask, who delivered me an order to dispatch her privately, and left in my possession a large bag of gold as a reward for my trouble. Oh! my father, how shall I describe to you her piercing entreaties to live?

‘For the sake of God, consider,’ she cried, ‘the infant I bear in my bosom.’

“I burst into tears, and unable to perpetrate the deed myself, conveyed her to the convent of St. Catherine’s, and gave the abbess a part of the reward, to confine her in a dungeon, and starve her to death.”—

“Sinner,” said the friar, “what was the name of this unfortunate lady?”

“She told me that she was the daughter of Don Juan de Castillas, a wealthy gentleman, who lived not far from the convent of St. Dominic: this is her picture, father.”

He seized it, and cried out in the most violent agitation of mind,

“ You are her murderer, then ? ”

The villain uttered a loud shriek, and pointed to the foot of the bed.

“ It is there ! ” he cried, “ it is there ! See how the spectre glares at me ! It holds a bloody dagger in its fleshless hand : it approaches.—Oh God !—Save me, father, save me.”

The wretch grasped the trembling and almost senseless friar by the arm—

“ Exert yourself, or I shall be plunged into the deepest pit of hell : look at it ; speak to it ; protect me.”

He fainted upon his pillow.—Francis instantly rushed from the room, and left the villain in the agonies of death, without administering to him the ideal comfort of absolution.

When the monk reached his cell, the powers of language are not sufficient to describe his situation. He paced the room up and down, in a state of wild distraction ; he pressed the picture to his lips, and kissed it repeatedly, in a delirium of affectionate remorse and sorrow.

“ Behold, villain,” he cried, “ the expressive beauty of that face ! lips that would have administered to the heart the celestial ecstasies of love united with sincerity : eyes that languished with desire, but at the same time possessing power to awe the vilest advocate of immorality to respect ; they seem to turn with horror from a wretch that barbarously butchered innocence. Oh Catherine ! Catherine ! I would that I could raise thee from the dead ; for it was my villany that prepared for thee an early and untimely grave. Oh ! that I had died in infancy. I cannot live to be the prey of sorrow and reflection ; I can no longer suffer these unceasing pangs of guilt : this world to me is as a wild to the bewildered traveller, when the dreaded darkness of the night spreads over the heavens, and leaves him to misery and tears. Oh my God ! how weak are the bonds of reason, how frail the judgment of man, when the momentary sweets of dissipation can tear them asunder, and blast his happiness for ever ! ”

He had neglected in his distress to fasten the door of his cell; and with incredible surprise he observed it open, and his implacable enemy, Jerome, enter the apartment.

“Father,” said he, “I had retired to rest; but brother Ansalem, who devotes his time to philosophical pursuits, and who prefers the night for study and contemplation, overheard your exclamations, and pitying your distresses, immediately called me from my bed, to render you assistance and comfort: by this time the monks are assembled in the refectory, probably waiting with anxiety for my return, to know the result of my visit. Disclose to me, father,” he continued, with a smile of affected compassion, “the sufferings of your heart; look upon me as your friend, your brother.”

“In iniquity I do,” replied Francis, haughtily.

“Beware,” exclaimed Jerome, “how you wantonly insult me, or belie my cha-

rafter. Contempt begets hatred. I could unfold a tale, Francis, that would soften the most obdurate heart to pity, and stimulate the most inactive mind to indignation and revenge. If you had loved Catherine"——

The friar started from his place, and caught Jerome by the arm.—

"Speak on, load me with reproaches, curse me and despise me, for I do acknowledge myself to be a villain; but first respect the memory of Cleanthe."

It is impossible to describe the sensations of Jerome, when Francis discovered to him that he was in possession of a secret, on which his life depended; he stood for some minutes as one struck senseless by the lightning of heaven.

"Go," said Francis, as the tears flowed down his cheeks, "go, and be at peace; we probably may never meet again."

When Jerome had quitted his cell, Francis prayed with devout contrition during those intervals when despair left him to the tor-

ments of reflection. Early in the morning he wandered alone in the avenues of the garden; and as he passed a bed of poisonous plants, which he had cultivated for chemical experiments, the dreadful alternative of suicide struck him, as the only method to save him from a public trial and the horrors of a violent death by the hands of the executioners. He accordingly gathered a quantity of those fatal flowers, and distilling from them the baneful juice, infused it into his drink, and swallowed it the following night, previously commending his soul to the mercy of God.

When the poison began to operate, his senses forsook him, and he raved violently, cursing the hour of his birth, repeating the name of Catherine, and continually imploring the mediation of his Saviour with God for his salvation.

The brotherhood, alarmed at the noise, ran to his cell, but too late to relieve him. They administered medicines, but in vain; he continued in a state of distraction until

noon, when the agonies of death seized him, and he expired, a most deplorable and melancholy spectacle.

Thus died a man, who, from the natural benevolence of his disposition and the goodness of his heart, might, from an intercourse with mankind, have been happy and beloved; but buried in the solitude of a convent, and deprived of all the habits that connect themselves with the necessary and social comforts of life, he on the first dawning of a brutal passion became its slave, and yielding to its fatal influence, lived the prey of wretchedness and horror, until the miseries of his conscience compelled him to insult his God, by precipitating his guilty soul into his divine presence—

“ Without one prayer repentant to avert

“ The just and dreaded punishments of hell.”

A secret and malignant triumph spread upon the countenance of Jerome, when he beheld the unhappy Francis stretched upon his couch a lifeless corpse. As he stood

by the body he discovered the picture of Catherine, and snatching it hastily from the bosom of Francis, examined it with profound attention, and then concealed it in his pocket. Jerome and De Carros the first opportunity searched the cell of Francis with the strictest attention. They found in it the manuscript with the bones of the infant. Jerome instantly destroyed the manuscript, and wrapping the bones and cloth in an old napkin, he consigned them at midnight to the earth, enjoining at the same time De Carros to profound secrecy.

CHAPTER IV.

" But not alike to every mortal eye
 Is this great scene unveiled ; for since the claims
 Of social life to different labours urge
 The active powers of man, with wise intent
 The hand of nature on peculiar minds
 Imprints a different bias, and to each
 Decrees its province in the common toil."

AKENSIDE.

ALEXO and his pupil had not travelled far, before Gaspardo sunk into a gloomy state of reflection. Alexo endeavoured to divert his mind from meditation, but to no purpose; his raillery and pleasant jokes were lost. At last he spoke—

" Alexo," said he, " I esteem you as a friend, and would willingly obey the directions of the jew, but my feelings are too powerful for the base ties of false honour. I claim no kindred with that fellow; he is not my father, nor one of the Hebrew tribe,

but a man of the most despicable character. He traffics with robbers and murderers, and encourages them to commit the most inhuman crimes for the sole purpose of enriching himself by sharing the spoil. You know him well, Alexo; he is no other person than Father Jerome, a monk of St. Dominic's order. Now hear what a villain he is. You recollect the man who stiled himself Pedro?"

"Yes," answered Alexo, "I do."

"Then," replied Gaspardo, "you have seen one of the most hardened and bloody knaves in all Spain. His intimacy with you was the effect of design; for as soon as you quitted the convent, Jerome employed that fellow to entrap you, and that house was to have been the place of murder, and myself the perpetrator. Pedro hired me himself, through the means of a man who resides in the province of Old Castile: but I thought well of you, and persuaded Jerome to let me take you from the house, and dispatch you in a forest at no great

distance. This contrivance was only to reveal the plot to you, and save your life."

During this extraordinary speech, Alexo continued in a state of dreadful surprise; and turning to Gaspardo, thanked him on his knees for the preservation of his life.

"I hope one day," said he, "to be revenged upon my enemy."

"Revenge!" cried Gaspardo, flourishing a pistol in the air, and his eyes sparkling with delight. "Bravo! The sooner it is satisfied, the better appetite for the deed. Let it be to night. To night let us return to Madrid, and shoot the old beldam through the head; we shall then have no impediment in our way: there is plenty of ill gotten wealth, I warrant, to reward us for our trouble."

Alexo hesitated, and made some objection to undertake so violent a proceeding.

"It may endanger our lives," he replied.

"Not in the least," said Gaspardo. "I know the house is inhabited by the old

woman only, and its retired situation precludes us from the possibility of an attack from passengers."

He stooped, and looking stedfastly at Alexo, exclaimed,

"Why do you hesitate? If a share in the abundant riches we shall find in the house will not tempt you, the alternative is this," putting one of his pistols to his head; "for I am resolved upon the deed."

"Hold!" cried Alexo; "I consent."

They turned back, and loitered about the metropolis until the approach of midnight, when they went by a private way to the house of the pretended jew. They rapped at the door, and for some time no one appeared. At last the old woman opened the little grate, and inquired who was there, and what they wanted.

"We are returned," said Alexo, "in consequence of an accident that has happened to the jew's son: a fall from the mule renders him incapable of sitting on the animal; and, unless medical assistance is pro-

cured, his death will be the certain consequence."

"Lack-a-day!" she cried, "what is to be done? here is no one but myself in the house, and I am old and lame."

"Open the door," said Alexo, "and let us in; for the night air is very cold."

The bolts gradually drew back, and immediately the door opened, Gaspardo rushed forward, and stabbed the old duenna to the heart. Without making any noise, and by the moon-light that beamed through the lattice into the passage, they raised the body from the ground, and conveying it into the garden, buried it in the most unfrequented part of a thick shrubbery.—Gaspardo then hurried to the house, and led Alexo through a long gallery to the room where he had seen the monk weighing the silver, and bartering with the thieves. They forced open a small door in the wall, where Gaspardo said a valuable chest was deposited; and as they were busily employed in searching for the booty, the tone of a

lute was faintly heard, accompanied by a female voice.

“What is that?” cried Gaspardo, as he started from the spot.

Alexo replied, that he had once heard the sound of music, accompanied, as he supposed, by the same voice, and about the same hour of the night.

After a pause of some minutes the air was repeated. By following the sound of the lute they discovered the room in which the unfortunate forrower was confined; and after much trouble succeeded in forcing open the door. When they entered the apartment, a lady of an elegant figure, apparently worn out with distress, rose from a couch, and addressed them—

“I have long anticipated your business, and I am ready. Death is the only refuge from the piercing calamities I now labour under, and I meet it as the minister of future happiness.”

She drew a picture from her bosom, and kissed it with affectionate transports.

At this instant a clock in some neighbouring church struck one.

“ We are your friends,” cried Gaspardo; but it is past midnight, and we must travel many miles before day-break. If you will follow us, we will conduct you to a place of security.”

“ Gracious God !” she exclaimed, “ am I to look upon you as my deliverers from captivity ?”

“ Waste no time,” said Gaspardo, “ in exclamations of gratitude : our business is with the concealed treasures of your gaoler; take the lamp, and follow us.”

They stationed the lady at the top of the stairs, whilst they descended into a vault, the floor of which was strewed with the mouldering bones and skulls of human beings, to warn them if any one entered the house during their search; for the many private ways that communicated with the prison of the Inquisition fully justified the prudence of such a step.

“ Perchance,” said Alexo, as he passed

over the scattered ashes of the dead, "this is the unfortunate Cleanthe's tomb."

"Come along," cried Gaspardo, as he trimmed a torch which he carried, by thrusting it against the damp and rugged walls of the cavern, "come along, our time is short, and we must not idle it away in reflection."

They went to work, and soon discovered a large chest filled with valuables, which they plundered.

"Another such as this, and I should set off contented," cried Gaspardo; "but we cannot stay any longer; the monks of St. Dominic will be stirring, and my professional brethren quitting their stations on the forest roads for their haunts in the city."

He had scarce finished his speech, when Alexo perceived the lady hastily descending the stairs.

"We are betrayed," he cried.

"How," exclaimed Gaspardo, "betrayed!"

By this time the lady had got within hearing.

“ You are discovered,” she uttered, with a countenance expressive of horror: “ there is a fellow in the house, calling aloud for the old housekeeper. I saw him pass through the gallery, as I stood in the passage.”

Gaspardo, without saying a word, extinguished the lights, and precipitately left the cavern.

After some time had elapsed, Alexo saw him descending the stairs, accompanied by a man whom he knew from his voice and stature to be the villain Pedro.

“ Merciful God!” he exclaimed, “ they are coming to murder us.”

The lady grasped him by the hand.

“ Let us secrete ourselves,” she cried, “ in one of the recesses that surround this horrid dungeon; perchance we may discover some outlet that will enable us to escape their designs.”

At that moment the light suddenly dis-

appeared, and they were again left in total darkness.

“ Now,” said Alexo, “ let us fly from this scene of blood : the time is precious.”

They hastened along the gloomy vault, and had nearly gained the stairs, when Gaspardo appeared with the lamp at the extremity of the cavern.

“ Hift! hift!” he cried, as he approached, “ all is safe, all is safe : where are you going? Surely you would not leave me alone in this horrible place. What! you thought, I suppose, that Pedro was coming to pay you a visit. He is a sad dog; but I have sent him away very well satisfied : still that is no reason but that he may return with assistance, and secure us; for I have had several examples of his treachery. Follow me, and let us begone while we are at liberty.”

After traversing a long narrow passage, they ascended a winding stair case, which led into a small romantic tower, that was situated in a secluded part of the garden.

“ So far, so good,” said Gaspardo, as he threw the lamp upon the ground. We have now only to mount our mules, and gain the high road to Castile, to be out of the power of Pedro and his hoary confederates in iniquity. Come, my lady, give me leave to assist you to seat yourself behind Alexo; I am not accustomed to gallant the sex, but I suspect myself to be possessed of the feelings of a man, and his first duty is that of attention to the female part of society. I have a wench at home, that will prove good company, I warrant; or she is not what I take her for.”

He then assisted the lady to seat herself on the mule behind Alexo, and, mounting his own, left the metropolis by a private and unfrequented road, as he said, for his cottage in Old Castile.

They rode furiously along, until the morning broke over the blue summits of the mountains before them, when the songs of muleteers and the tinkling of bells were heard upon the distant plains.

“It is now time to alter our course,” cried Gaspardo, as he struck into a small winding pathway of a thick wood, by the road side, through which they continued their journey until late in the day, when they arrived at a hut situated in a solitary valley at the foot of a barren and stupendous mountain. The only person that appeared to inhabit this lonely dwelling, was an arch boy, expert at any thing but honesty. He took good care of the mules, and supplied the travellers with excellent refreshment. As the evening approached, they left the hovel, and continued their route until the third day (passing along the most unfrequented and intricate paths, and stopping frequently at small huts in their road for food), when they discovered a cottage, surrounded by a clump of tall trees in a retired part of a forest.

Gaspardo alighted from his mule, and rapped at the door. It was immediately opened by a young woman, who saluted him with

“ You are welcome home, my love.
And if you knew how I have been plagued
to know where you”——

Gaspardo knitted his brows, and laying
his pistols upon the table,

“ Rose,” said he, rather pettishly, “ these
are two friends of mine ; they have travelled
a long journey without murmuring, and
you must make them merry and welcome
with our homely fare.—I am a gentleman
by birth, my lady, but reduced by necessity
to fell wood in this forest for the support
of myself and family, I cannot treat you
with dainties; but the best my storehouse
affords shall be set before you.”

He immediately procured, with the as-
sistance of Rose, some refreshment, consist-
ing of bread, cheese, fruit, and excellent
wine.

When the sun was set, as pardo sud-
denly disappeared, and left the travellers
with his wife. Alexo endeavoured by art-
ful interrogation to gain some information
respecting Gaspardo, and the employment

he followed in so solitary a residence, but to no purpose: she was extremely reserved, and her answers to all his questions, although ambiguous, were guarded with expressions that fully supported the honesty of her husband. To rid herself of the conversation, she expressed a wish to know how Gaspardo came acquainted with them, and who they were; and this circumstance drew from the lady the following narrative:

THE HISTORY OF DONNA CLARINDA.

“ I am the descendant of a noble family in Madrid, and was married at an early age to Don Alphonso de Berinda, whose family disapproving of our union, condemned us to live in obscurity, upon a scanty income, in a small house near the metropolis. We continued in this situation for some years; during which period I was mother to a son and daughter. We brought them both up in the faith of the most holy catholic religion: I carefully instructed my daughter in the most useful branches of female educa-

tion; and the boy, under the tuition of his father, excelled in all the manly exercises he taught him. He instilled into his mind the love of hardship, and the desire of acquiring fame and respect by courage and honourable actions. In the meridian of our happiness the minister of state received information that a conspiracy was forming against the government. He employed the most despicable artifices, to involve every person in trouble that he disliked. Informers, under the mask of friendship, entered the families of the innocent, and bribing their servants with large sums, caused them, upon the evidence of such sorry scoundrels, to be apprehended, and committed to the care of gaolers and other imperious officers of the crown. It was the fate of Don Alphonso to be suspected, from his singular mode of living. He was warned of the consequences that must inevitably result from his continuing near the metropolis, and advised to leave the country: he hesitated; but the horrid idea of the Inquisition

surmounted all sensibility ; and hearing that his house was beset by the officers of injustice, he consulted his safety by a precipitate retreat in the middle of the night. My sensations at this melancholy event can better be conceived than described. He was accompanied only by his son, who affectionately insisted to share his father's misfortunes: to me he denied that felicity, expressing his hopes that the reign of a Spanish Nero would not be long, and then he could return to me in safety. Some time elapsed before I heard from him, and then his letter did not discover the place of his retreat. But this solitary pleasure was soon denied me; for the state, proceeding upon the most dishonourable and unprincipled plan, privately opened the letters that appeared suspicious, and condemned what they found, as if coming from conspirators, to the flames. A proclamation was also issued, describing the persons of the fugitives, with a large reward for their apprehension, dead or alive, and denounc-

ing a confiscation of their property. Our little all was accordingly embezzled by these state counsellors. At this afflicting period, a friar of the order of St. Dominic interfered, and caused part of our property to be restored. Our gratitude on this occasion was beyond bounds; we loaded him with blessings and thankful acknowledgments for his disinterested generosity. His frequent visits to our melancholy retirement were received with those expressions of approbation and friendship, which our obligations to him required; and thinking myself highly honoured by his acquaintance, I readily granted him his request, of becoming my confessor. My spirits were continually depressed; and although my daughter strove by tears and entreaties to dissuade me from despondency, I gave myself up a prey to grief and despair. Father Jerome (for that was his name) conjured me to reflect upon the distressing situation I should place my daughter in, if I con-

tinued to add to my afflictions by indulging in melancholy.

‘ She will be left,’ said he, ‘ without a friend, in a dissolute and abandoned world.’

“ His words roused me to a sense of my maternal duty, and the gloom that hung upon my mind was dispelled by his advice; and no other thought but a strict attention to my daughter’s welfare and happiness occupied my mind. The beauty of my daughter greatly attracted the notice of the young cavaliers of Madrid, who designedly met us in our walks; and, fearful some unpleasant intrigue might be the result of their civilities to her, I determined to leave the metropolis, and retire into a distant solitude: for her heart was engaged to Bertram, a cavalier of distinction, deservedly esteemed, and who was on a journey in Andalusia.

“ Having communicated my intention to the friar, he highly commended so pru-

dent a step, and advised me by all means not to prolong my stay in the city on any account.

‘ It is a place,’ said he, ‘ where vice and
 ‘ debauchery are the prevailing habits of
 ‘ the inhabitants, where the villanies of
 ‘ mankind are practised without fear or
 ‘ shame, and where youth and beauty
 ‘ remain insecure from violence, though
 ‘ under the immediate protection of age
 ‘ and experience. The attention paid to
 ‘ Cleanthe by our young cavaliers is the
 ‘ effect of a dissolute and lawless passion;
 ‘ and her personal charms only draw
 ‘ forth their flattering admiration. In ex-
 ‘ posing her to injuries arising from con-
 ‘ stant adulation, you commit an act
 ‘ of immorality. Besides, if Bertram loves
 ‘ her, you hold in trust an inestimable
 ‘ treasure, far greater to him than the do-
 ‘ minion of empires. I feel a regard for
 ‘ you, and of course become interested in
 ‘ your daughter’s welfare; and as I have
 ‘ devoted my time and influence to the

‘happinefs of both, I fhall continue to
 ‘affift you in your folitude. Let me hear
 ‘from you foon.’

“He took my hand, and preffing it affectionately to his lips, retired, apparently in forrow. I felt an unusual degree of regret in parting with a character fo deservedly efteemed; for I looked upon him as the protector of diftrefled innocence, and the friend of the unfortunate. I retired to reft, and continued mufing upon my pillow, until about the hour of midnight, when I was fuddenly roused from reflection, by the repeated and violent fhrieks of a perfon in diftrefs. I rofe instantly, and rufhing into my daughter’s bed chamber, found her almoft lifelefs, in the arms of a female fervant. I inquired the caufe, but could gain no answer. At length I heard a violent and loud rap at the door, and, on looking out of the window, difcovered a party of men muffled in their cloaks, waiting near the portico. I demanded their bufinefs. They replied, that their com-

mission did not extend so far as to answer that question, and bade me open the door. I withdrew from the window to the bedside, where my daughter sat; but I had scarce been there a minute, when the door was burst open, and three ruffians soon after entered the apartment. They instantly seized me and my daughter, and hurrying us into a coach that was waiting at the door, drove off to the prison of the Inquisition. When we arrived in the court-yard, I begged to take a farewell of my daughter, whom they were hurrying away. This request was sternly denied: and forcing me along a narrow dark passage, they confined me in a loathsome dungeon. My grief at this unprincipled act of barbarity was unbounded: I tore my hair, and beat my bosom, in the anguish of horror and despair. I called upon the good and benevolent father of St. Dominic for assistance, but in vain; the dreadful stillness of the place seemed only interrupted by my disconsolate and afflicting cries. I continued

for some weeks in my prison without seeing any human being, but the speechless ruffian that brought me food. One night, as I was consoling myself with a book of prayers that lay in my cell, a man in the habit of a friar came into my dungeon, and said he had terms to propose to me, upon which my liberty depended. I desired him to explain himself. He then replied,

‘ I am desired by the Holy Office to release you, provided you promise never to mention the circumstance of your imprisonment, nor demand your daughter; but to forget her.’

“ By this unfeeling and barbarous proposition I was almost harrowed up to a pitch of madness, and swore by the powers of heaven never to sacrifice an innocent and friendless child for liberty, although my sufferings were increased with tenfold severity.

‘ Then you are determined,’ said he, ‘ to languish in this horrid dungeon, at the expence of a little mistaken sensibility :

‘ your daughter will live in eastern magnificence; the mistress of a great man is a situation not to be rejected.’

“ Away !” I cried ; “ for I will never yield to such abominable persuasions : I had rather expire upon the rack, than live the base betrayer of my daughter’s honour. I fell upon my knees, and prayed that she might drench her hands in the blood of him who dared, by such hellish means, to insult his God, and damn the character of his sex. The villain immediately struck me a blow on the face, and retired, muttering these words, as he closed the door—

‘ You will see her no more.’

“ In the gloom of solitude, and harassed by reflection and sorrow, my fancy pictured the beautiful Cleanthe in the hands of her murderers; her piercing entreaties sounded in my ears, mingled with the horrid and blasphemous imprecations of those sanguinary ruffians. I thought I saw her bloody corpse lie lifeless on the ground, and kneeled to kiss it: but when reason returned, and I

found them but the dreams of a disturbed imagination, I threw myself in horror on the couch, and in floods of tears passed away the hours of night. In this dreadful situation I spent some months. My food was bad ; and rendered feeble by the noxious vapours of the dungeon, my strength was not sufficient to withstand the consequences of a cold, and it gradually increased until I was reduced to the necessity of keeping my bed. I was then daily attended by a woman, who administered the medicines prescribed for my relief by the physician of the prison, and who constantly persuaded me to accept the terms offered by the friar for my liberty. Her endeavours were ineffectual. She excited my pity; for I justly concluded her conduct was the act of imperious necessity. After a few days nursing, I was sufficiently recovered to quit my bed, and walk about my cell; and one night, as I was rising for exercise from my solitary couch, the door of my cell turned slowly upon its hinges, and a form, to all appear-

ance the phantom of a female, bearing a small lamp in her right hand, and a bloody cross in the left, stood before me. I shrieked aloud, and attempted to move; but on a sudden I seemed fixed to the spot, and the powers of utterance suspended. It pointed to some bloody marks upon its bosom, and with a slow and hollow voice spoke as follows :

‘ Behold the spirit of your murdered
 ‘ daughter ! Her body moulders amongst
 ‘ the unhallowed dead, in the secret caverns
 ‘ of this dreadful prison. To you her death
 ‘ may be ascribed : and to punish the ob-
 ‘ stinacy of a heart that might have saved,
 ‘ by yielding to mistaken prejudices, the
 ‘ life of an unfortunate child, I am doomed
 ‘ to visit you at the silent hour of mid-
 ‘ night, when all eyes but thine are sealed
 ‘ in slumber.’

“ It glared at me for some time with a terrific frown, when it looked up piteously, as to heaven, and left the apartment. Instantly I fell senseless on the floor : how long

I laid in that situation I cannot tell ; but when I had in some measure recovered my senses, I found myself in total darkness ; for the light, which was placed near me on a projection of the rugged wall of my prison, I had in my convulsive struggles thrown down and extinguished. I passed the remainder of the night in prayer ; and when the morning dawned, I became so sensible of my situation, that I had nearly insulted my God, by committing an act of suicide.

“ Some time after the first appearance of the ghost, it stood before me again about the hour of midnight, and, pointing to the wound, vanished as before. The next month I was taken from my dungeon, first having a handkerchief tied over my eyes, and conveyed away in a coach. After I had left the coach about half an hour, it was removed, and I found myself in a cell, in the convent of St. Dominic, and Jerome sitting by my side. You may easily conceive my joy and surprise at finding myself in the company of my faithful friend. I

fell upon his neck in an agony of sorrow, and, after a pause of some minutes, I told him of the villanous proceedings of some unknown Inquisitor, and the appearance of the spectre. His sympathy for my unhappy situation almost bordered upon madness. He wrung his hands, and appeared to feel for my misfortunes, in a manner that convinced me of his sincerity and disinterested regard for me. As we were conversing together, a voice uttered, in a solemn manner,

‘ Beware of the perfidious and designing
‘ fex!’

“ I started from my seat, but he caught me by my cloaths, and pulled me again towards him. We remained in a doubtful suspense for some time; but a prevailing silence convincing us we were alone, the conversation was resumed. It chiefly turned upon my daughter’s cruel death, and the means I intended taking to reveal it to the world. I perceived him extremely agitated at this proposition, and he left the cell, as

in deep thought. From that time I saw him no more. In the evening a monk brought me a flask of wine and some provisions, and begged that I would try to refresh myself by repose. The wine somewhat relieved my sinking spirits, and I laid down upon a mattress in the cell. Sleep overtook me; but about midnight I was awakened by a loud rap at the door. I rose from the couch, and opened it. A man in a mask immediately entered the cell, and led me from the monastery to a coach, that was waiting at a small door leading into a dark, narrow street. It drove off with us in it, to the house where you discovered me. On my entering it, an old, crooked woman bade me dry up my tears; for I should soon be happy. She led me to the room where you found me. I frequently urged her to tell me the cause of my imprisonment, but she never made me any answer. One day she brought a lamp and an old lute, which she said would afford me amusement when I was inclined to use it. It was an ineffect-

mable treasure. I constantly soothed my mind with the most plaintive airs I was master of, and cheered my gloomy apartment with the song of melancholy. I am indebted to you for my delivery and the preservation of my life, and must leave it to your own feelings to determine how sensibly I revere your unlooked for generosity and humanity."

At the conclusion of this narrative Alexo turned to the lady, and replied,

" Alas! madam, the truth of your daughter's inhuman murder I can confirm. I once had the misfortune to be thrown into the prison of the Inquisition, and was put into the same dungeon where the unfortunate Cleanthe was confined."

Alexo then related to her the discovery of the manuscript, with the unburied bones of the child. He also undeceived her respecting the character of Jerome, and told her of his adventure with him and DeCarros in the chapel of the convent of St. Dominic.

" Villain!" exclaimed Donna Clarinda,

“ was it for this that I innocently and virtuously admitted you into the sanctuary of my family, and cherished in my heart the seeds of gratitude? O God! how long is this execrable monster to triumph in his crimes? to insult thee, by profaning the holy altar? to mock the laws of religion? and, in contempt of thy sacred commands, riot in licentious depravity?”

Sorrow overcame her, and agitated by the convulsive struggles of horror and affection, she sunk into a swoon. Rose instantly flew for some water; and whilst they were busied in endeavouring to recover her, the dog barked loud, and footsteps of some person approaching the door were instantly heard. It was Gaspardo. As he entered the house, he started in seeming surprise, and inquired the reason of Rose why they were not at rest?

“ The hour is late,” he cried; “ perhaps you are not aware that it is past midnight.”

She pleaded Clarinda’s indisposition, in excuse for her conduct, and, after lighting

a lamp for him, returned to her assistance. When Clarinda was so far recovered, as to be able to walk, Rose conducted her to a chamber, and desiring to be called if she should in the night feel herself at all indisposed, left her to assuage the anguish of her heart in silent sorrow.

Whilst Alexo sat in the room below, by the embers of a wood fire, listening to the sighing of the night winds among the trees that surrounded the cottage, Gaspardo came down stairs with a brace of pistols in his girdle, and a large sabre under his arm. He looked suspiciously at Alexo, and asked him if he did not intend to go to rest that night. On Alexo's replying in the affirmative, and that he only waited for a lamp, he turned his appearance off with a smile, and said,

“ You see, Sir, I carry with me forcible arguments in favour of my profession:— you understand me, I have no doubt; but be secret, for your life depends upon it.— Early in the morning I shall call you to work with me in the forest as a wood-cutter,

to avoid suspicion. Rose will take care of the lady. You will be acquainted with more of us in time.—Farewel.—Go directly to rest.”

He shook him by the hand, and quitted the cottage. Rose soon after made her appearance, and conducted Alexo to his chamber. Placing the lamp on the hearth of the fire-place, he seated himself by the window; for being now convinced into what hands he had fallen, he suffered himself to sink beneath the weight of sorrow and the dreadful horrors of reflection. As the moon rose at intervals from her bed of clouds, and shone upon the scene, he endeavoured to examine the situation of the cottage, that, if necessity should require it, he might be able to make his escape without difficulty: but the fear of being seen by Gaspardo, whom he suspected was lurking about the habitation, made him cautious of opening the window, and the thick brushwood that grew on all sides of the cottage limited his researches to a narrow circuit. He felt an inclination to lie down upon the mat-

truss and repose himself, but suspicion and distrust too powerfully opposed the desires of nature. His little volume of favourite poems again supplied him with amusement; and fixing upon the following Sonnet, which he had often read in the gardens of the convent with exquisite delight, he did not seek to repose, until the morn broke through the shades of retiring night,

“ And tiptoe stood, on misty mountain tops.”

SONNET,

TO THE EVENING STAR.

WHEN coming twilight veils the neighb'ring plain,
And tinkling sheep bells, in the distant fold,
Sound cheerful to the slow pac'd village swain,
Who journeys, snow besprent, and sad with cold,
Beside the drowsy team, along the vale;
Then thou, pale herald of departing day,
Cheer'st the poor woodman, as across the heath,
Heedless of fleet, or the bleak wintry gale,
He tracks, with lonely step, the beaten way,
List'ning with silent fear the bell of death
Or watch dog's howl; till ruddy elves appear,
Greeting with shouts and smiles their toil spent sire,
Who from the lorn wood's side is wont to bear
The moss grown faggot for their ev'ning fire.

CHAPTER VI.

—— “ Now Nature speaks
 Her genuine language, and the words of men,
 Big with the very motion of their souls,
 Declare with what accumulated force
 Th’ impetuous nerve of passion urges on
 The native weight and energy of things.”

AKENSIDE.

WHEN Gaspardo quitted the cottage, he proceeded to join a gang of outlaws in their rendezvous amongst the secret recesses of a solitary ruin. It had been a monastery in the days of the primitive monks; several entire archways remained, and were beautifully covered with ivy and blooming wall-flowers. As he passed through one of these venerable monuments of antiquity, the glimmering of a light amongst the ruins, at a little distance from the pathway he was pursuing, struck him with surprise. Darkness surrounded him, and the owl only disturbed the silence of the solitude as she rested on

the mouldering battlements of the neighbouring ruin. He walked with hasty steps from the spot towards the recess, to join his companions; and before he had gained the private road that led to the cavern, he heard a voice repeat his name aloud several times. On turning to discover who it was, he perceived a man coming through the adjoining bushes with great precipitation. It was Jacques, the son of Don Alphonso. He carried a lighted torch in his hand, and as the flame beamed upon his countenance, Gaspardo discovered it the picture of terror and apprehension. He asked him in a low and tremulous tone, if he had seen any thing?

“Nothing,” said Gaspardo. “The glimmering of a light in a distant part of the ruin startled me a little time back; but I suppose it was you, or some one of the band.”

“Did not you see the brilliant cross it carried upon its bosom?” said Jacques, agitated in the extreme.

“The brilliant cross which it carried on its bosom! Why, the fellow is mad: I tell you, I saw nothing but a light at a distance.”

“It is strange!” exclaimed Jacques, “that I should have seen these things so distinctly, and you nothing. It followed me through several windings of the wood, and looked at me with compassionate sorrow. If a murder has been committed in this solitary place, I thank God, I am not the perpetrator. There has been foul play somewhere, Gaspardo.”

Jacques had scarce finished his speech, when he started forward, and caught Gaspardo by the arm—

“Look,” said he, in a whisper, “yonder is the spectre; it is now stealing through the middle archway of the ruin; let us follow it.”

“Hold!” cried Gaspardo, “not for the dominion of the earth would I follow a ghost. I say, let us retire; we may repent our temerity; for these nightly wanderers

of the grave are generally averse to the curiosity of mortals."

Jacques with great reluctance consented to his proposal, and they hurried by the nearest way to the cavern, where they expected to meet the band.

When they entered the private passage that led to the subterraneous apartment, they heard the sound of voices, mingled with frequent bursts of laughter. The band was assembled; and when they entered the recess, Grinaldo reproached them with delay. They, in excuse for their conduct, related the whole of their adventure near the old archway, but met with contempt and ridicule from the band; some of whom were in a state of intoxication. The subject was dropped, and they by turns questioned Gaspardo respecting the lady in his possession, and the quantity of silver and other valuables stolen from the jew at Madrid. He faithfully related every circumstance attending that adventure, and

begged to know if Alexo might be taken into the gang.

Grinaldo addressed them. He said, that as their leader, Don Alphonso, was not present, it would be inconsistent with their established rules to adopt any measure, or consent to any proposal, without his knowledge. He therefore proposed an adjournment to the next night at the same hour. This was generally consented to, and they separated, each for his respective habitation.

Early in the morning Gaspardo called Alexo from his bed, and equipping him in an old leathern jacket, put an axe into his hand, and bade him accompany him.— They went into a remote part of the forest, and began felling wood for faggots. As they were busy at work, a man, seemingly in deep reflection, with a spear under his arm, passed by them.

“That is Don Alphonso,” said Gaspardo, “our captain; I must speak to him, but will return immediately.”

He followed Alphonso through the thicket, and continued with him for some time. At length they both approached Alexo, and Gaspardo introduced him as his friend to the captain. Alphonso gave him his hand, with an air of such respectful politeness, that it convinced Alexo, he was not one of the same stamp with Gaspardo; and misfortune appeared upon his brow, marked with the strongest characters.

When Alphonso parted with them, he retired to his cottage. As night approached, he felt himself unusually restless, and disturbed in his mind. He walked in the garden before the cottage, but a propensity to melancholy reflection obliged him to retire to rest. He fell into a light slumber; but about midnight he awoke, in consequence of a loud clap of thunder that shook the cottage to its foundation; he started from his bed, and, hastening to the window, perceived the heavens sheeted with lightning. Ere the tempest ceased, he sunk again to sleep. But in his dreams the ter-

rific images of death and murder harassed him until the cold drops of perspiration poured down his forehead upon his pillow, already wet with tears. On a sudden he again started from his bed, and supporting himself by the curtain, exclaimed,

“ If thou art suffered by Providence to revisit the earth, say, bloody spectre, what is the crime thou comest to charge me with? What deed have I committed, that the quiet of my repose should be thus disturbed?—Speak to the purpose of thy visit.”

At this instant he was roused from a state of almost perfect insensibility by a loud rap at his chamber door.

“ Who is there ?” he cried.

“ Your son,” replied Jacques, “ who is come to remind you of your engagement with the band.”

“ I will be with you instantly,” he answered.

After a few minutes he became collected; for the vision, that he supposed himself to

be addressing, he found nothing more than the impression of a horrid dream: but as he passed under the mouldering walls of the once fainted edifice, to gain a private path that led to the cavern, his heart thrilled with an unaccountable dread. The dream still created in his mind a superstitious fear; and considering it as the warning of some dreadful event near at hand, the moaning of the wind among the trees that shaded the fragments of the towers, or the bat, as it flitted in his way, caused him to start involuntarily with horror.

On his entering the cavern, the band rose to receive him, but expressed their astonishment at his unusual appearance.—His cloak thrown carelessly over his shoulders, his hair dishevelled, and without being armed, he seemed like one distracted.

Grinaldo approached him with concern, and inquired the cause of his singular appearance.

He assumed a cheerful countenance, and assured them he was perfectly well, but had

overslept himself; and that the disorder of his clothes arose partly from forgetfulness, and partly from the precipitate manner in which he left his bed. He begged the business of the night might not be interrupted, and seating himself at the head of the council, began to question Gaspardo concerning the adventure at Madrid.

“It is unparalleled in the annals of finesse,” said one; “the plan was executed with infinite credit to the connoisseur that projected it.”

“Yes,” replied Moreau, a robber of the most abandoned and sanguinary principles, “it was excellently contrived and executed; but the lady is the subject that most demands our attention. She in all probability will discover the nature of our profession, if we send her away, and our lives will no doubt pay for such incautious conduct; and if we retain her, she will inevitably be a disagreeable burthen to us. It is a melancholy reflection, that the crime of murder should be registered amongst the acts

of imperious necessity; but so it is; and in this instance we must not depart from the sure method of preserving our lives and property."

"Why not," said Don Alphonso, "imprison her? Is it like men, to murder a woman in cold blood? Is it possible, Moreau, you can reconcile such a horrid act of barbarity to your conscience? Is Nature so deficient in her duty, as not to shudder at such unprincipled cruelty? I shall never voluntarily consent to the proposition."

A warm debate took place; but Moreau continued firmly to support his plan upon principles of the vilest nature; the majority too were of his opinion; and in spite of Alphonso's threats and entreaties, the question was carried in the affirmative.

Jacques was the person, to whose lot fell the executive part of this barbarous decree.

When affliction drives us to despair, it is to the silent walks of solitude that the mind turns with peculiar pleasure, to indulge itself in melancholy sorrow; for the

deep gloom of the grove at midnight, and the stillness of the hour, interrupted only at intervals by the nightingale, call forth the energy of contemplation, and inspire the unfortunate with a degree of pleasing reflection, not to be met with in the busy walks of life, crowded with the sons of licentiousness and bigotry. Alphonso retired alone from the cavern, and wandered in the most solitary parts of the forest.

“Thank God,” said he, “that I had sufficient courage to oppose the villains in their design upon the life of this unfortunate stranger. I have done my duty as a man, although I have been unsuccessful in my endeavours to prevent them from murdering her. She may be married, and have a helpless family depending on her for protection. I am married, Oh God! and have left exposed to the insults of an imperious world a wife and daughter, coward-like, rather than meet my fate upon the scaffold. Oh my Clarinda!—my Cleanthe!”

At this moment a man approached him,

muffled in his cloak. Alphonso, suspecting it was one of the robbers, fled from the spot, and endeavoured to secrete himself; when the stranger threw his cloak on the ground, and hastily followed him. Finding himself unable to elude the vigilance of his pursuer, he waited his arrival, and discovered in the unknown the person of his son.

“ Oh ! my father,” said Jacques, “ to-night the lady is to die, and I am the person commissioned by the gang to perpetrate the deed. Tell me, if the tie that binds me to this horde of ruffians is so sacred, as to be esteemed before those of honour and humanity?—Oh God ! these hands are yet unpolluted with the blood of human nature; and to steep them deliberately in that of innocence,—to plunge a dagger in the bosom of a guiltless stranger, an unfortunate victim of treachery, would doom me to eternal misery, in the pit of hell. By the powers that rule the world, I cannot do it. I had rather die by the swords of our

confederates, than live to think upon a crime, that no penitence can expiate."

"My son," replied Alphonso, "reflect upon the dreadful consequences of a refusal. You will be instantly sacrificed to the fury of Moreau, that sanguinary ruffian. It is the first crime, *wilfully* committed, that dooms the perpetrator to an eternal punishment in the world to come. Perhaps it may be pardoned. The mercy of God is infinite; and the victim of dire necessity is not like a voluntary agent. If you are destroyed, I shall be left to the mercy of these fellows, without one on whom I can depend for assistance, if necessity should require it."

They heard a horn sounded in a distant part of the forest, and fearing some of the party might surprise them, hastily left the spot, and gained their cottage unobserved.

When the fatal evening approached, it appeared to Jacques unusually dark and still. The wild shrieks of the death bird

were constantly heard near the cottage; and the wind, as it blew hollow amongst the trees, sounded to him mournful and prophetic. The time of midnight drew near. Tears prevented Alphonso from speaking; but he roused Jacques from a state of stupefaction, and pointed to the dial, the hand of which was upon the hour of twelve.

“ I go,” he cried, as he unsheathed a shining poniard; “ I go to steep my hands in human blood; but necessity has no law, and I hope to make my peace with God.”

Muffling himself in his cloak, he left the cottage, and proceeded immediately for Gaspardo's hut. It was past twelve when he reached it, and he found Gaspardo waiting his arrival at the garden gate.

“ Where is the lady?” said Jacques, as he entered the hut.

“ Hush!” cried the villain; “ she sleeps in the chamber directly over us, and has been in bed but a short time.”

“ Is Alexo in the cottage?”

“ Oh, no !” replied Gaspardo ; “ he is safe : I watched him into the most secret part of the ruins. All is ready ; and I have purposely trimmed the lamp in her chamber with bad oil : for the fainter light, you know, the better you will be able to escape, if she should awake.”

Jacques ascended the stairs, and discovered the door of the chamber ajar ; he cautiously entered the apartment, and was proceeding to the bed side, when a faint groan, that echoed along the room, arrested his attention. Immediately a cold dew spread all over him. He durst not advance to perpetrate the deed ; and for some time strove in vain to conquer the unaccountable dread that seized him. After a little time had elapsed, he collected himself ; and advancing to the bed, to execute his bloody commission, drew back the curtains, and gazed upon Clarinda, who was in a profound repose, with silent and agonizing sorrow.

“ Her next sleep,” said he, as he raised

his arm to plunge a dagger in her bosom,
 “ will be in death.”

She instantly sighed, and repeated, with tender emphasis,

“ Alphonso ! Oh, Alphonso !”

Struck with surprise and horror at this unexpected circumstance, he was precipitately quitting the room ; when the glittering of a diamond cross, that lay upon the table where the lamp was placed, attracted his notice. He immediately recollected that his father had frequently inquired of him if he had ever seen one of the same kind, in the possession of any of the banditti, and, stepping gently to the table, he took it up, and was on the point of examining it by the lamp, when some one whispered his name at the door. Suspecting it to be Gaspardo, he secreted the cross in his bosom, and opened the door with an intention to dismiss him by a significant frown. But the way was perfectly clear, and without loss of time he locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

“ She must be roused from slumber be-

fore any one can enter the chamber," he whispered to himself, "and may alarm Rose with her shrieks, if Gaspardo's villany should prompt him to murder her before my return."

The ruffian was waiting for him, wrapt in in a long fur cloak, at the bottom of the stairs.

"Have you executed your commission? Is the lady dead?" he cried, eagerly catching hold of Jacques, as he passed him.

"No," he replied. "As I was about to murder her, I found I had, in my haste to be punctual to the time appointed for the purpose, forgot to arm myself with a dagger. She sleeps very sound, and I shall be gone but a few minutes."

"That is bad," exclaimed the villain, "very bad indeed; but you need not return. Here," drawing a dagger from his belt, "here is one that knows its duty; take it, and be quick about the matter: the night is very far advanced, and the morning will be upon us before we can set things to rights again."

"I dare not," said Jacques, as he shook the ruffian by the hand, "I dare not disobey the orders of Moreau, who gave me one of his own daggers, and bade me bring it to him again, crimsoned with her blood. You know his temper."

"I do, I do," cried Gaspardo; "he is the father of every thing that is inhuman and bad;—passionate and blood-thirsty to a degree of barbarity. Go, and return speedily; for I shall be very surly and displeased, if the lady is not murdered to night."

Instantly Jacques flew to his father's cottage, and rapped loudly at the door. He waited in dreadful anxiety for admittance, but no one appeared. He tried to open it, but in vain. The time was precious; and such an unfortunate delay almost drove him to distraction. After a few moments deliberation, he determined to search for him in the old sepulchre, his father's nightly haunt for private reflection and prayer; but ere he had closed the garden gate, Al-

phonso appeared armed with a naked sword, and seized his son by the arm. Suspecting him to be one of the gang, who had been to plunder his habitation, he demanded his business in an angry tone, and threatened him with death for his temerity.

“Pardon me, father!” exclaimed Jacques, “but I have accidentally discovered”—

He interrupted him.

“Is it Jacques? How! so soon returned, my son? Have you murdered the lady?”

“No: circumstances of a very interesting nature prevented me. The cross you so often told me to respect, as the hallowed tribute of affection, I found in the possession of this unfortunate lady.”

“Great God!” exclaimed Alphonso, “it cannot be true. Where is it? Give it me, that I may satisfy my suspicions.”

A lamp was instantly lighted at the glowing embers of a wood fire; and the moment Alphonso's eyes were cast upon the cross, animation seemed for a time suspended. At length, a flood of tears flowed

down his cheeks, and, supporting himself upon his sword, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed,

“ Accept my thanks, O God! for thy merciful and benign protection.” Turning to Jacques, “ You said, you had not murdered her?”

“ I did; but I promised Gaspardo that I would return, and dispatch her before morning.”

“ Not for the sole possession of all earthly treasures. Return directly with this ring, and wake her: at the first sight of it she may be alarmed; but conjure her to be silent, and follow your directions. Wrap her in this cloak, and bring her as a dead body from the villain’s cottage to the old sepulchre amongst the ruins; I will there wait your return. Be bold and resolute in the execution of this trust; for the lady, whom you was commissioned to murder, is ~~YOUR—MOTHER.~~”

They separated at the entrance of the

wood, and Jacques returned with all possible haste to the cottage of Gaspardo, and found him, as before, waiting for him at the garden gate.

“ So, so !” he exclaimed, as Jacques approached, “ you have at last found your way back again. If expedition is requisite in cases of necessity, you are a very pretty fellow to confide in. Damme, you will soon find that my associates are no such easy-tempered gentlemen, if you flatter yourself that cowardly tricks are accomplishments.”

He gave him no reply ; but making his way up stairs, unlocked the chamber door, and stepping gently to the bed side, awoke Clarinda. She shrieked aloud, on perceiving a man, armed with a drawn dagger, leaning upon her pillow.

“ Hush !” said he, “ for God’s sake ; your life depends upon silence and your obeying my commands.”

“ Villain !” she exclaimed, “ that naked poniard plainly evinces your business in my

chamber at this late hour. Hesitate not to fulfil your trust : I will cheerfully forgive you ; for I am tired of my existence."

" I am no murderer," he replied, laying hold of her hand, " but your friend ; rise, and look at this ring."

She immediately quitted the bed (having retired to rest in her cloaths), and examined it at the lamp. A livid paleness diffused itself over her countenance, as she pressed it to her lips, and rushing into the arms of Jacques, swooned on his bosom.

He immediately pierced his hand with the dagger, and staining the bed cloaths and floor with blood, wrapt the lifeless Clarinda in his cloak, and quitted the apartment, with her in his arms. Gaspardo met him upon the stairs—

" Joy, joy !" he cried, when he saw Jacques bearing Clarinda in his arms. " Suppose I assist you in burying the body."

" Assist me to bury the body indeed, when there is an hour's work up stairs for

you. The bed cloaths and floor are stained with blood, and Rose will evidently discover what we have been about, if she finds such marks of cruelty in the chamber."

"True," answered Gaspardo; "that is well thought of. Rose must not be in the secret; her confounded ideas of humanity and religion would cause me to lead the life of a dog, if she found us out."

Looking through the cottage window,

"Come, come," he cried, "there are many stars yet to be seen; the morning is not so near as I expected. Farewel, my good fellow: let her have a decent burial; and be sure you do not suffer your conscience to get the better of your courage."

He opened the door, and continued watching Jacques until he disappeared, by striking suddenly into an intricate path that led into the bosom of the wood; when he returned to the chamber, in order to free it from the suspicious marks of villany it exhibited.

Jacques hurried to the sepulchre, and

found his father at the entrance, anxiously waiting his return. He flew to meet him, and, clasping the insensible Clarinda in his arms, proceeded instantly by a private pathway to his cottage.

When he had recovered her from the natural effect of so unexpected an event, mutual sensations of joy and sorrow succeeded: but it is by conception only, that the feelings of Alphonso and Clarinda can be known; the powers of language are inadequate to such a task.

She fell upon his breast, and exclaimed in a flood of tears,

“ Oh, my beloved husband! since that fatal night which separated us, I have been harassed by a succession of unprecedented and cruel misfortunes. The hallowed bosom of the church, that sacred refuge for the unfortunate, contains your worst and barbarous enemy. Oh, my husband! your daughter, the beautiful and adored Cleanthe, is murdered.”

“ Murdered!” cried Alphonso, as he

started from his chair, "murdered! did you say, murdered? Where was the hand of Bertram? Where his boasted love for my Cleanthe?"

"Yes," replied Clarinda, "murdered, foully murdered, by Jerome, a friar of the order of St. Dominic. Bertram at the time was on a journey in Andalusia."

"Almighty God! I never expected to combat with this misfortune, in addition to the sorrows thou hast loaded me with."

His speech faltered, he staggered to his chair, and burst into a flood of tears. As soon as he had recovered himself, Clarinda related to him her unjust confinement in the prison of the Inquisition, the cause of her daughter's murder, and the appearance of the spectre.

When she mentioned the bloody cross, Alphonso recollected that the spirit, which he fancied had appeared to him in his chamber during the tempest, held the same emblem of catholic perfidy in its hand; from this circumstance he concluded that

it must have been the apparition of his beloved Cleanthe.

When Alphonso related to her his adventures since their parting, and the mode of life he pursued, Clarinda was struck with the deepest concern and astonishment.

“ It is an act of necessity,” said Alphonso; “ for as Jacques and myself were travelling through this forest, we were surprised by robbers, habited as herdsmen, and conducted to a castle hard by, where we remained in confinement for some days. At last, the master offered us our lives, if we would consent to join the gang, and live in the forest with his associates. This proposal was not rejected; and we have only waited a favourable opportunity to effect our escape; a plan for that purpose is now in agitation.”

The dawn of day was now seen to break through the branches of the tall trees that surrounded the cottage; and Alphonso, after procuring some refreshment for Cla-

rinda, left Jacques in the cottage with his mother, and retired alone into the wood.

As he was at work, making fagots, he heard a man utter the following soliloquy:

“ No reasoning shall convince me to the contrary. Day after day the same horrid acts are perpetrated with impunity. There is a God, whom we are taught to adore as the spirit of universal benevolence and justice:—why the bolts of his almighty vengeance are not hurled against these villains; why the laws of morality and religion are to be grossly violated; and why an established system of debauchery and murder is to be erected by the ministers of his holy word,—are questions, that no philosophy, however subtle, can satisfy. Last night the unfortunate stranger was murdered, and the perpetrator of that horrid crime is a man. Great God! I burn with indignation, when I find myself a being capable of committing premeditated acts of the blackest and most malignant dye,—of ranking myself with the world of brutes,

by hunting down my fellow-creatures for prey. If the mouldering corse of that unfortunate victim be secreted in this forest, may the caves and lonely recesses ring with the piercing complaints of her wandering ghost! may it haunt the villain in his retirement, and harrow up his mind to the highest pitch of distracting wretchedness!"

Struck with surprise at this singular speech, Alphonso made towards the spot where he heard the voice, and discovered Alexo prostrate on the ground, and in tears.

He spoke to him. The sorrower rose from the ground, and was hastily retiring.

"Why," said Alphonso, "will you fly me? Why desert the man who is your friend? Why quit the society of one who is destined to endure, in exile with yourself, the keenest pangs of sorrow and misfortune? The lady, whom you so affectionately lament, is alive."

"Alive!" exclaimed Alexo, as he rushed towards Alphonso.

“ Yes,” he replied, “ she is alive, and in a place of security. I possess but little knowledge of your character, but have entrusted you with a secret on which my life depends, confident you are worthy of my esteem, from the sentiments you have just now uttered in this solitude.—But I see Gaspardo at a distance. Meet me to night at twelve, near the old archway in the ruins, and you shall be further acquainted with me and my friends. Farewel.”

At the hour of midnight Don Alphonso committed Clarinda to the care of his son, and, wrapping himself in his cloak, went to the old archway, where he found Alexo waiting for him, as appointed.

The moon had risen, and shining with unclouded brilliancy upon the scene, her light enabled them to proceed with expedition to the ruin.

“ Here,” said Alphonso, as he entered the sepulchre, “ here I retire alone, when I can escape from the company of our associates, to devote a few hours to reflection,

and the memory of those days which I spent free from care and distress, in the bosom of my beloved, though now unhappy, family."

He seated himself near a mutilated statue of the Virgin Mary, and began his history by discovering to Alexo his real situation with the robbers, and the cause that forced him from his home; he mentioned the appearance of the spirit, and lamented with the severest sorrow the loss of his unfortunate child.

"Oh, my friend!" replied Alexo, "the opinion you heard me deliver concerning religion, flowed from the inmost recesses of my heart. I was initiated at an early age into the monastery of St. Dominic at Madrid; but discovering the friars of the order to possess principles of the most abandoned nature, I left the sanctuary in disgust, and was, in consequence, thrown into the horrid prison of the Inquisition. It was in my dungeon, Don Alphonso, that I accidentally found a manuscript written by your daugh-

ter, containing an account of her sufferings inflicted by Don Jerome, of the order of St. Dominic, her persecutor. The mouldering remains of an infant were also discovered in the same hole with the manuscript."

"Oh God!" exclaimed Alphonso, "the tale harrows me up to distraction.—You positively can confirm her death?"

"I can," said Alexo: "the manuscript was finished by another person, who affirmed, that Jerome one night, after having urged the gratification of his brutal passion in vain, stabbed her to the heart.—But his villany will not escape punishment. I have deposited the manuscript and unburied bones of the babe with Friar Francis, a virtuous and holy monk of the same order, who has given me a solemn promise to exert his influence in bringing the guilty Jerome to the bar of justice."

"God will reward you," replied Alphonso: "but I can no longer listen to a

fact so replete with hellish cruelty and distress."—He sunk upon the ground in the agony of sorrow.

At this moment a horn was sounded on the outside of the sepulchre.

"Hark!" cried Alphonso, "that fatal note portends no good; some of our party are abroad to night, waiting, I suppose, to seize upon the unfortunate travellers that are bewildered in this dreadful forest."

The sudden rushing of the wind down the staircase had nearly extinguished the light, and footsteps were soon after distinctly heard of some person descending into the sepulchre. Alexo unsheathed his sword, and was proceeding with Alphonso to reconnoitre round the building, when Grinaldo entered the sanctuary.

"You are in tears, Alphonso," said he, as he entered the tomb: "are you so frail in nature, as to seek out a solitude to play the woman in?"

"Alas! Grinaldo, you know not what piercing and undeserved sorrows have hap-

pened to my family since my unfortunate flight from Madrid. My daughter, the beautiful and beloved Cleanthe,——Oh God! where was thy protecting arm?”—

“What can this mean?” exclaimed Grinaldo: “these frantic and distressing invocations! this distracted countenance! these tears! They must arise from some secret and severe misfortunes. Oh! suffer me to share them with you; suffer me to mourn in friendship over the records of your misery.”

“I cannot repeat the tale,” said Alphonso, drowned in tears: “I cannot think of it, but with the fury of a madman; it is a crime too black for the catalogue of human villanies; it is a deed that would blast the character of a savage. If there is a hell, Jerome cannot escape the punishments of the damned.”

Grinaldo then listened to a circumstantial account of the whole affair; but ere Alexo had finished his tale, he looked at him with surprise, and, grasping his hand, exclaimed,

"Do you say, a monk of the order of St. Dominic?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Alexo: "the villain was also a moral lecturer and confessor to the convent of St. Catherine's."

"St. Catherine's?" cried Grinaldo. "Is it possible that Biffare, a woman who was so universally esteemed in Madrid for her piety, her benevolence, and rigid adherence to morality, could admit into the sanctuary of her convent so profligate a character?"

"Ah, Sir!" replied Alexo, "I am afraid she is not worthy of the good opinion you entertain of her: I once rescued from destruction a nun who was privately conveyed through a subterraneous passage from the priory of St. Catherine's, to the chapel of St. Dominic's convent. I have in my possession a picture, which I found in the church, after her enemies had disappeared with her. In the height of her distress she frequently pressed it to her lips, and gazed upon it with affectionate rapture."—

He presented the miniature to Grinaldo.

“ The friars,” he continued, “ in a conversation that I overheard, called her Amantha.”

“ Merciful Heaven !” exclaimed Grinaldo, striking his forehead violently with his hand. “ What a secret have you revealed ! what distressing tortures has that name conveyed to my afflicted heart ! This picture I with horror confess to be mine : my suspicions are confirmed. Oh, Alphonso ! Amantha is the daughter of your wretched and distracted friend. This picture, when last we separated, I gave her in the convent parlour : she kissed it a thousand times, and hurried it to her bosom, as the most sacred repository for a treasure ever to be adored and beloved. Misfortunes drove me from Madrid ; the loss of a beautiful and beloved wife compelled me to forsake the world : I travelled for the re-establishment of my health, impaired by sorrow ; but being seized by robbers, my servants were murdered, and myself conducted to this forest. I committed Aman-

tha to the protection of the perfidious Biffare, until my return, and this is the reward of my liberality and confidence. Accursed wretches! what vice, what deliberate villany is there, that ye do not practise under the cloak of religion? Oh God! this load of life is insupportable. In me, Alphonso, you behold the father of the too much injured Bertram: him, who with high toned authority forbid his son the common right of participating the affections of the unfortunate Cleanthe. Heaven has now sufficiently punished me. Oh, my children!"

"Is this the father of Bertram?" said Alphonso, as he took him by the hand.—

"Is it possible that I find Don Bertram de Leyva my companion in distress?"

A pause of some minutes ensued; when Alphonso exclaimed,

"Come, come, we must not think too much of our misfortunes, nor brood with distress over the past errors of our lives; rather let us seek out the capital, and hunt this barbarous libertine from his den. Is it

worthy of our sex to endure calamities patiently, that call aloud for justice and the scourge of revenge? We must not live to countenance a crime, which by the sacred ties of parental affection we are bound to punish. These murderers of our children shall not triumph in their guilt. To-morrow at midnight I purpose leaving this haunt; part of the gang will be upon an excursion, and we can with ease master the rest, if their curiosity should prompt them to watch our conduct. Oh, my friend! let us not give ourselves up to despair. There is an invisible protection extended to the unfortunate; for the lady, who was to have been so barbarously murdered last night by Jacques, proved to be his mother. Yes, Don Bertram, she is the wife of your unhappy friend."

"Great God!" he cried, "when will the hovering clouds of mystery disperse, or fortune leave us to repose in quietude? I consent to leave the gang to-morrow night. Alexo, you will accompany us?"

“O yes! resolutely will I undertake any thing, to escape from such a perilous existence.”

“Then,” said Alphonso, “we will secure the horses in our possession, and station them by the last fountain in the great pathway of the forest, as the day closes, with my son Jacques and Alexo. We can repair secretly about midnight to the place, when all is quiet, and the thieves at the skirts of the wood. We must arm ourselves, for fear of an attack.”

When they had fully settled the plan for their escape, and were about to separate for the night, a horn was again heard at a little distance from the ruin: they listened attentively for some time, but all was silent; at last they accidentally perceived a man skulking among the ruins.

“That is one of the gang,” said Alphonso. “The villain, in all probability, has overheard our conversation. You, Alexo, had better return with Grinaldo to his cottage, in case of a surprise.”

Alexo readily acceded to the proposal, and they parted.

When Alphonso entered his cottage, Clarinda was sitting in the chamber by a small fire, reading a book of prayer. He communicated to her and Jacques his intention of decamping in the night with his friends from the haunts of the robbers, and bade them be in readiness to accompany him.

“You do not mean,” said she, with anxiety, “to enter Madrid but in disguise?”

“I cannot live in peace,” cried Alphonso, “whilst the murderer of my daughter exists; but we will talk of that on our journey: let us now go to bed, for I have need of repose.”

About an hour after they had retired to rest, Alphonso was disturbed by the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and soon after by a gentle shaking of his chamber door. He seized his sword, and rose from his bed, to discover the cause of his alarm; when he

met Gaspardo cautiously entering the room with a naked dagger in his hand. On perceiving Alphonso, he started, as with surprise, and immediately extinguished the lamp that stood upon the table near the fire place. The disappearance of the light was the appointed signal for assistance from without; and instantly another ruffian entered the chamber. The moon fortunately was at the full, and shone with great brilliancy through the lattice. Alphonso by this circumstance was enabled to defend himself against the united attacks of the ruffians. He shouted for assistance. At that instant Gaspardo fired a pistol; but the shot passed by him, and pierced through the curtains of the bed. Jacques, who was sleeping in a room above, roused by the noise in his father's chamber, entered the apartment, and found his father gallantly engaged in a desperate combat with one of the ruffians. He instantly took part in the conflict, and shot him through the head. Gaspardo, on hearing Jacques upon

the stairs, contrived to make his escape. During the scuffle, Donna Clarinda had fainted. As they were endeavouring to recover her, footsteps were again heard upon the stairs. They left the bedside, and prepared to renew the combat; but Alexo entered, in his shirt covered with blood, and a naked sword in his hand.

“The barbarous ruffians,” he cried, “are foiled in their attempt to murder us.”

“Where is Don Bertram?” said Alphonso; “is he fallen?”

“Oh, no!” replied Alexo; “he sent me here to warn you of the danger that threatened us; but I see you have had your share in the fray.”

At this moment a voice without shouted, “Halloo, halloo!”

“There he is,” cried Alphonso; and, rushing down stairs, found him at the door, dragging along with him a wounded robber.

“This is the only one alive out of three,”

said Don Bertram; “ and I propose this fellow to make a confession of the horrid conspiracy against our lives.”

By this time the party had assembled below, and a fire lighted upon the hearth.— Mutual congratulations now passed between them, and Don Alphonso embraced the almost expiring Clarinda in a transport of affectionate joy. In vain did they urge the dying ruffian to confess; the natural brutality of his disposition, aided by the effect of his immoral habits, rendered him fullen and obstinate: but when the convulsions of death warned him of his dissolution, he confessed the whole plan, and gave a circumstantial account of what course the robbers intended to pursue after they had accomplished their design.

“ Previous to this abandoned way of enriching ourselves,” he cried, with apparent contrition, “ we were friars belonging to the holy order of St. Dominic; but by too strictly observing and enforcing the laws by which the society was regulated, we in-

curred the displeasure of Father Jerome, an officer of the Inquisition, who drove us from the convent in ignominy, and under the disgraceful charge of incontinence. To save his own reputation, he persuaded the Inquisitors to issue orders to all convents in Spain not to admit us. Persecuted, and with beggary staring us in the face"——

His speech faltered, and in an instant he expired without a groan.

In the morning Don Alphonso and his companions buried the bodies of the thieves in an unfrequented part of the forest, and, saddling the horses of the banditti, left their wild retreat for the capital. They journeyed through the bye ways of the forest until the shades of evening approached, when they entered upon a wide, uninhabited plain. The night proved tempestuous; but encouraged with the hope of discovering some herdsman's cottage upon the wild, they determined to pursue their route, and abandoned the idea of returning back into the forest for shelter.

As they ascended a hill, one of the party discovered a light at some distance; and, making for the spot, they found it proceeded from a taper burning in the chamber window of a solitary hut. Jacques called aloud for admittance, but no one answered or appeared. They plainly saw, through a crevice in the door, the blaze of a wood fire, and an extinguished lamp upon a small table before it. After waiting some time, and repeating their shouts with violent raps at the door, a woman opened the small window near the roof, and inquired who they were, and what they wanted.

“ We are benighted travellers,” said Jacques, “ and request an admittance.”

“ I dare not let you in,” she replied; “ my life would be forfeited, if I did.— There is a castle not far off, if you pursue your journey in a strait line from the next monumental cross.”

Jacques urged his request with repeated promises of protection from violence, but

to no purpose; she continued firm to her first answer, and withdrew.

As they were about to break open the door, a person at some distance repeated the name of Gaspardo.

Jacques immediately suspected the signal, and, muffling himself in his cloak, advanced to meet the stranger.

On his approach the man whispered, "Is it all over, and are the bodies buried?"

"Yes," said Jacques; "but more of that when we get into the cottage: at the door are some fresh travellers, waiting for admittance; take time, and we may dispatch them also."

"Bravo!" cried the man, "bravo! Let us go in through the stable. I have been upon the watch some time for you."

He conducted Jacques through a private way into the hut, and immediately opened the door, to admit his friends.

But on Alexo's unmuffling his face, the woman, whom they discovered to be Rose,

the wife of Gaspardo, immediately exclaimed,

“ Lord of heaven! we are undone.”

“ Why, how now!” cried the astonished herdsman. “ What, in the name of the devil, have I been deceived? By the blood of the virgin” (laying his hand on his dagger)——

“ Hold,” cried Jacques, as he drew his sword from the scabbard; “ we come to tell you that your companions are at rest in their graves. Their villany was detected, and we have sacrificed them to our resentment.”

“ Ah!” said Rose, “ I told them all how it would be; but they still persisted in the scheme. Well! they have got their reward now for all their crimes, and I am free from a monster.”

At this the herdsman assumed a more cheerful countenance, and brought out the best of every thing that his cupboard afforded, bidding the travellers make merry, and endeavoured with affected hospitality

to drown all suspicion as to his real character. During the night, however, he several times quitted the cottage, and returned apparently more and more dissatisfied: suspecting the tale of Jacques's to be unfounded, he repeatedly whistled loud and shrill from the chamber window, and left a light burning in the casement that looked towards the forest; but as the morning dawned, without the appearance of Gaspardo and his associates, he despaired of being revenged upon his guests, and behaved to them with great civility and attention.

Soon after day-break, they left the herdsman's cottage, and taking a beaten road, as directed by their host, pursued their journey until noon, when they arrived at an inn, contiguous to a small village, upon the highway, where they alighted for refreshment. On entering a small room appropriated for travellers of respectable appearance, they perceived a proclamation stuck over the chimney piece. It related

the recovery of the king from a violent and alarming fit of sickness; and that in consequence of so fortunate an event, it recalled all exiles, of whatever denomination; pardoned the supposed conspirators, who had fled from the vengeance of the state, and restored the confiscated property of the delinquents. It is impossible to express the joy this agreeable intelligence diffused over every countenance: they embraced each other in exultation, and, after having procured a carriage for the better accommodation of Clarinda, pursued their journey to Madrid with the utmost dispatch.

CHAPTER VI.

"Vain are thy thoughts, O child of mortal birth!
And impotent thy tongue."——

AKENSIDE.

THE body of Francis was buried in the cemetery of St. Dominic, with the accustomed pomp and solemnity observed upon such occasions. A tomb was erected by the brotherhood over his ashes, and a consecrated lamp burned during the night, near the monument.

Jerome was called by the brotherhood to the office of superior: and when he reflected that he was abbot of a powerful monastic house, an officer of the Inquisition, and the confessor of a sectary, unrivalled for the beauty of its nuns, and governed by an abbess too intimately connected with himself to respect the ties of honour or morality,—he smiled, within himself, con-

temptuously on the world; and regardless of that purity of character which should ever distinguish a priest, his creed was made up of the most licentious artifices, which he practised without compunction. The abbess of St. Catherine's was his idol: he found her a woman of great talents, and a proficient in every kind of vice; her schemes were laid with the deepest penetration, assisted by the cloak of religion, and executed with all the secret skill and address that dissimulation requires. He visited her continually, under the pretence of administering consolation to the sisterhood in the confessional chair; but, in truth, only to riot with his mistress in pleasures of the most extravagant and libidinous nature. Callous to the piercing calls of conscience, he, in the outward display of piety and professional austerity, secreted the growing vices of his corrupt heart. Power, in a variety of instances, has been known to produce a perversion of all that is humane and good in mankind; which is sufficiently

instanced in history, from Sylla to the Duke of Alva. The mind of Jerome had been equally debased by power; which, however, in his sphere could only be made subservient to dissipation, and the pleasures of an indelicate voluptuary.

He had risen early one morning, having in his dreams spent a night of visionary happiness, and was walking beneath a row of beautiful elms (where the scattered flowers impregnated the air with the most exquisite odour), to refresh his spirits, languid with the force of imagination, when De-Carros appeared, hurrying towards him. His countenance was expressive of terror and dismay.

“What is the matter?” said Jerome.

“Matter!” he exclaimed; “we may be surrounded by a world of troubles before to-morrow. Our private house has been plundered, Grodilla murdered, and Clarinda escaped.”

“That villain Gaspardo is the perpetrator,” cried Jerome, trembling with anger

and apprehension, " and Alexo, in all probability, has betrayed us to the officers of justice. Go instantly to the Inquisition, and order search to be made after the criminals. Swear that they are heretics and forcerers; accuse them of any thing in my name, and all will be believed, and to night I will devise means for a discovery of this damnable proceeding. Go, De Carros, immediately, and observe my directions; we stand in a perilous situation. Oh! that we had murdered Alexo ourselves. But go where I direct. Farewel; to morrow you shall hear further upon the subject."

They separated, and Jerome, according to custom, went to pay his morning visit to the abbess. On entering the convent parlour, he found her engaged in conversation with a nun of exquisite beauty, who was in tears. He attempted to withdraw; but Bissare hastily called him back, and exclaimed,

" We are not talking secrets, father; I am only assuring this vestal of my sincere

regard for her welfare, and the affectionate sympathy I feel for her sufferings. She is an orphan, without the blessings of friends or fortune, and has just received a letter, acquainting her with the death of a distinguished personage, who has long patronized her, and softened her distressing situation with maternal friendship."

A flood of tears burst from the lovely eyes of the unfortunate stranger, as Bissare uttered this fact.

"Be advised, my love," continued Bissare, "to moderate your grief; consider me as your mother; your confidence shall not be abused, but, on the contrary, every indulgence, that the affection of a parent could suggest, shall be granted. A strict adherence to the severity of our religious duty shall not be enforced, nor shall the solitude of this convent afford you cause for sorrow or regret."

She rang a bell, and desired one of the nuns to appear.

"Here, Melissa," said she, in a whisper,

“ I entrust this sister to your care; walk with her in the garden, and endeavour to persuade her that the veil is not so terrible an affliction as she supposes.”

No sooner was the door of the parlour closed, than Jerome began to make the most particular inquiries concerning the young vestal who had left it.

“ She is beautiful to the highest degree,” said he, “ and more adapted for the brilliant circles of fashion and gaiety, than the cloisters of a convent. The beams of love darted from her eyes with such fascinating and luxurious sweetness, that I could (had I not been checked by the sanctity of my professional character) have gloried in being the devoted victim of their subduing charms.”

“ Fie,” said Bissare, as she took the father by the hand. Can Jerome, the grave superior of St. Dominic, the public confessor of young and old, the moral lecturer of St. Catherine’s, the firm supporter of our catholic faith, contaminate his ideas with

the charms of woman, of a being vain, cruel, and inconstant? Can he, who punishes with unrelenting severity the advocates of iniquity, stand a confessed victim to an impure and unholy passion?"

"Unholy passion!" he exclaimed, as he lifted his eyes to heaven; "and is love to be denied admission into my heart, by the cold and barbarous precepts of my profession? Can continence be deemed a virtue, when we lament, with unceasing pain, any restraint upon the liberty of our passions? My religion forbids me not to cherish in my bosom the seeds of affection; nor can I, by seclusion, suppress the wanderings of imagination. Suppose, Biffare, I should overleap all ideal barriers to my happiness, which by vanity and ~~deceit~~ have been instituted and endured, may I not hope for salvation? Reflect upon it. Is there no holy water that can wash away my crime? Can no reverend and pious father administer to me absolution?"

Biffare interrupted him—

“ Jerome, if we set any value upon our moral characters, let us drop the subject ; it is of the utmost importance ; remember we are alone.”

“ Well thought of !” he exclaimed ; “ I will follow your advice. But I am in trouble, Biffare : our private house is plundered, and Grodilla murdered ; the consequences of a discovery will be dreadful.”

As they were earnestly engaged in conversation upon this subject, the convent bell began tolling for midday prayers. Biffare immediately veiled herself, and begging Jerome to wait her return from the chapel, left him in the parlour alone.

It was then, for the first time, that he found the united influence of commiseration and affection triumph over the almost irresistible impulse of his brutal sensuality. If the beauty of Florella had forced from him those passionate exclamations, which, in general, are the short-lived offsprings of intemperate desire, her unfortunate situa-

tion, added to her deep distress, called forth, upon mature consideration, the tenderest feelings of sympathy and compassion: but, unwilling to suffer his mind to be the pupil of his heart, and wishing to dispel the intellectual gloom that seemed to threaten him, he rose hastily from his seat, and, opening the book case, took down an old folio, containing, amongst other things, the history of magic, and the secret systems adopted by several famous forcerers in the execution of their diabolical pursuits. When Biffare returned from the chapel, Jerome hastily concealed the book under his cloak, and observed that it treated upon a subject expressly prohibited to be made known.

“ I am not unacquainted with its contents,” she replied, “ and have carefully concealed it from the sight of any one.”

“ Well,” said Jerome, “ I will take it; but, on your life, be secret as to its being in my possession. Farewel. I am now going to the Inquisition, to consult upon declaring, by a public memorial, that Alexo

and Clarinda are heretics, and deal with the devil."

He left the convent; and as he passed along a dark avenue (wrapt in his holy weeds, and deep in thought), he perceived a man loitering under one of the towers of the prison gate. As he passed him, the stranger carefully concealed his face, and disappeared. This circumstance gave him some uneasiness; for no longer enjoying that stupor of conscience, which the villany of his heart had formerly subjected him to, he considered the most trifling incidents, that were at all mysterious, as prophetic and ominous. His visits to the priory of St. Catherine's, although continued with greater caution and reserve, were productive of consequences the most fatal he ever experienced. If he wandered in the gardens of the abbey, it was only to meet his adored Florella, and declare to her his passion; for the abbess now no longer shared his confidence and affection. He considered her as the insurmountable barrier between him

and the object of his heart. Every day added fresh vigour to his increasing love for Florella. His nights were sleepless, his days spent in solitude and tears. Often would he determine to send her under a false accusation to the prison of the Inquisition: but then he exclaimed, in the height of anguish and despair,

“ Can I witness so much beauty, simplicity, and innocence, languishing in a cell, the seat of misery and distress? Oh, no! But how foolish to suffer these unceasing pangs, which her beauty has created, to prey upon my heart, to waste my hours in sorrow and reflection, when this simple pen can make her mine for ever. It must, it shall be done.”

He took his pen, to write an accusation against her.—A tear dropped upon the paper.—He started from his chair, and tore it to atoms.

“ I will think of her no more,” were his words, when a rap at the door of his cell startled him with surprise. A billet was

delivered to him by the porter. He read it with attention. It was from Meliffa.

“ The way is clear, and no time is to be lost,” were the emphatic words it contained. He sought the convent gate with trembling steps, and was met in the cloisters by Meliffa, who conducted him from thence to the convent parlour. As she opened the door, no language can picture his delight and astonishment, when he discovered the beautiful Florella sitting at a table, and colouring a sketch which she had drawn for an ornament to be placed above the crucifix in her cell. It was the hour when our Saviour expired upon the cross. The countenances of the jews were pictures of the most affecting terror, and so well contrasted with that calm, divine, and expressive happiness, which illumed the features of the dying martyr, that it struck Jerome insensibly with awful admiration. She rose from her seat when he entered, and was about to retire.

“ Why,” said the friar, “ should I suffer this blessed opportunity to escape? I will

declare my passion, and the alternative, if she disregards my entreaties."

He stepped after her, and detained her. She shrieked aloud.

"Repeat that again," cried the agitated monk, "and a dungeon in the Inquisition will be your fate.—Mark me, Florella, to trifle with a man under the influence of his passions, is but to fool away your liberty—probably your life. You have represented me to the abbess in no favourable light. You must recollect that I have often said, I loved you. An opportunity so favourable as the present for retaliation, and the consummation of my wishes, must not be lost. Is it possible for you to resist the affectionate embraces of a man, whose life shall be devoted to your happiness?—Tell me that you love me, look upon me as your sincere and affectionate friend, and think not, in the zeal for order and continence, that an existence, languishing in the delusive dreams of pleasure, is preferable to realizing each delightful anticipation of the mind."

“Villain!” she exclaimed, “is it thus that you dare profane the asylum of our holy sisterhood, by the abandoned admonitions of a libertine? If you are destitute of that purity of mind, so requisite for a confessor of our order, you become an enemy to the faith, you violate the sanctity of this convent by your presence, and deserve those punishments, so often inflicted by yourself on the innocent victims of your malice.”

She struggled violently, and disengaged herself from his grasp. Her animated remonstrance struck him so forcibly with the enormity of his conduct, that he gazed upon the tears which flowed over her lovely cheeks, with horror and remorse.

“What have I said!” he exclaimed, apparently wild with confusion and distress. “What have I done! It was the incoherent language of a heart devoted to the conflicting passions of love and fierce desire. Forgive me, and pity my intemperate conduct.”

Unmindful of his penitence, every moment seemed to deprive her of a portion of that strength of mind, necessary to support and relieve her from such a dangerous situation; and as he was about to approach her again, she drew a miniature from her bosom, and, holding it before his eyes, exclaimed,

“ This is the picture of my mother: she was the innocent victim of cruel villany and infamous depravity; and that her offended spirit may not rise from the grave, to warn me of my fate, and chide me for not resisting, to the utmost of my power, the fatal progress of an unfated and dishonourable passion, thus I revenge the insult, thus I prevent the effects, of your premeditated outrage upon my person.”

She instantly drew a dagger from beneath her vest, and plunged it in his bosom.—

The friar fell; and, as he lay bleeding upon the ground, she exclaimed,

“ Oh God! what have I done?”

“Fly,” said the friar, “fly instantly from the vengeance of Biffare; you have not hurt me.”

Quitting the parlour, she ran wildly through the cloisters, until she arrived at the great gate of the convent; it was just opening, to admit a pensioner. She rushed into the street, but not unobserved by the portress. The event was immediately made known to Melissa, who dispatched a boarder after her, with instructions how to act, if she overtook her. In the mean time the abbess had entered the parlour, and found the friar bleeding on the floor.

She approached him, and, examining his wound, found the poniard had not penetrated far enough to cause any serious consequences, and that his fear only overpowered his senses.——When he had in some measure recovered from his fright, she was about to put several questions to him, respecting his situation; but the monk, who could not dissemble his fear and confusion, instantly rushed from the

room, and disappeared. At that instant Melissa entered the parlour, with the intelligence that sister Florella had fled from the convent, and no one knew of her retreat. Bissare immediately recollected the great attention Jerome usually paid to that nun, and the rapturous expressions he made use of, when he first saw her. These circumstances left no doubt in the abbess's mind, but that Florella was the perpetrator of the deed, to avoid, as she justly suspected, the violent and debauched purposes of the friar.

When Jerome gained his cell, it is impossible to describe the situation of his mind. It was not occasioned by the wound he had received from the hand of Florella. It was not the reflection, that he had basely endeavoured to plunge into misery, and to fully with infamy, an innocent and friendless child. It was not because he had fixt a curse upon his soul, by disregarding, with presumptuous and blasphemous arrogance, the principles of his holy profession, and the

vengeance of his God. No; it was the picture, the fatal picture, which Florella drew from her bosom, that stung him with the consciousness of his guilt, and almost hurried him to distraction. He knew it well; he knew it to be the image of his once beloved St. Anna; of her, on whom he had lavished wealth, and affection bordering upon adoration, until the birth of an unfortunate child; when he displayed the dawning principles of injustice and inhumanity, and became her inveterate persecutor; supposing by that means to secure himself from the imputation of a seducer. From the hour in which he abandoned her to the inhospitable world, no tidings respecting her fate had ever reached him. The mystery seemed explained. The tone in which Florella lamented the fate of her mother, and the picture of St. Anna being in her possession, convinced him that she was the offspring of them both. Harassed and tormented with the horrors of reflection, he about midnight left his cell, and pro-

ceeded to the convent of St. Catherine's. He there demanded to see the abbess. She had retired to rest, but was called from her cell, and met him in the parlour. Grasping her by the hand, he exclaimed,

“ I am come, Biffare, to beg you will accompany me to the vault under our chapel, where the bodies of heretics destroyed by the Holy Inquisition moulder into dust; for I have met with circumstances of late, so strange and horrible, that the power of supernatural beings only can elucidate them. Indeed, my mind is now the seat of the most distressing and bitter reflections; lay aside those ridiculous fears, which the generality of your sex are ever prone to indulge, when the dead are in question, and go with me; for the bones of the criminals, necessary to aid the spells of Gordezmondeto the magician, must be collected by a woman.”

“ Gracious Heaven!” said the abbess, “ I never can consent to such a proposal.— But, father, when I found you in the parlour wounded,”——

“Peace!” cried Jerome, interrupting her; “accompany me, or expect the fatal consequences of a refusal.”

He drew a dagger from his bosom, and, taking a lamp that was burning upon the table, with angry looks commanded Biffare to follow him.

They retired through a subterraneous pass to the chapel; and as they descended the stairs that led into the vault where the heretics were buried, the sound of voices echoed along the cavern.

“Lift!” said Jerome; “did I not hear something like the sound of human voices?”

The abbess spoke not; and they remained in perfect silence at the foot of the stairs for some time: at length the light of a torch gleamed upon the rough walls of the passage.

“Follow me,” he cried; “we will soon penetrate through this mystery.”

They reascended the stairs, and, secreting themselves behind a large pillar near the spot, in a few minutes observed a man,

habited as a servant to the Inquisition, ascend from the vault, bearing a torch and a spade, and who was followed by a lady in the habit of a nun without a veil.

“ Away, away,” said the friar to the abbess, and leave me to question this fellow concerning his prisoner.”

Bissare disappeared ; and Jerome advanced towards the aisle through which the strangers were passing, and exclaimed,

“ Who are they, that dare to intrude themselves into this holy sanctuary at so unseasonable an hour ?”

The man turned round, and, with apparent servility and fear, approached the friar, who discovered him to be the assistant gravedigger of the Inquisition, in his working dress.

“ Father,” he replied, “ as I was digging a grave in yon vault for poor Lucas, the torturer (who, with the Virgin’s assistance, is gone to heaven), this unhappy lady’s cries pierced me to the very soul. She was in a most dreadful dungeon, without either

lamp or victuals.—Who she is, or what she is, I know not; but I dare say she will readily tell you her history.”

He delivered the lady up to Jerome, and returned, whistling, to his occupation.

Biffare did not immediately quit the chapel, but remained near the spot, to satisfy her curiosity.. It was impossible for her to discern who the stranger was, from the darkness of the aisles; but she guessed it to be Amantha. She followed them up the chapel, until they disappeared through a small niche in the wall, which, on searching, she found was the entrance to a passage which, she concluded, led to the monastery of St. Dominic.

As she retired from the chapel, a man, smothered in his cloak, passed hastily by her; but turning suddenly about, he followed her down the avenue, and called her by name. As his voice echoed along the vaulted passage she was pursuing, she quickened her pace; but the stranger con-

tinued to follow her, and at last he exclaimed, as she was about to quit the chapel,

“ Do you fly from De Carros, Biffare?”

She instantly stopt, and, surveying his figure as he approached,

“ Come presently to my cell,” said she, in a kind of whisper; “ I have matters of great importance to communicate to you; but do not follow me.”

Jerome conveyed the lady to his apartments in the Inquisition, and inquired, with anxious solicitude, who she was, and the cause of her confinement.

“ Alas!” said she, “ I know I am sadly altered; but have you so soon forgotten the devoted victim of your unjust prejudices? have you no recollection of the person whom you intended to sacrifice in the chapel of St. Dominic, but was prevented by a monk of your own order?”

He started, with confusion and surprise; and that mind, formerly so bold and active

in the execution of villanous projects, became, in an instant, the prey of sorrow and remorse.

He conjured her to relate the history of her adventures since she fled from her prison in the convent of St. Catherine's.

"I did not," she replied, "leave my cell voluntarily, but one night was forcibly carried by De Carros and the abbess to the dungeon where the gravedigger found me, purposely, as I suppose, to bring me forward as a living instance of your cruelty, if ever you became the enemy of De Carros. I have subsisted almost entirely upon bread and bad wine; and the treatment I have received, from both, horrid in the extreme. That vault was their place of rendezvous for consultation; and I have, during my confinement, overheard several secret conversations between De Carros and Bissare; but the last particularly struck me with horror. It was a plan to murder you in a few days; and, if they succeeded, I was then to be instantly sacrificed."

At the conclusion of her narrative, his eyes flashed with indignant wrath; and, starting from his seat, he exclaimed,

“Amantha, the crime which I accused you of, in the chapel of our convent, was only a pretext for the real motives which induced me to conduct you there. The profligate Bissare, when your father quitted the capital, received from him a large sum of money for your support in the convent, during his absence; but if you did not survive his return, he gave the premium to the order. To obtain this, she determined upon your death; and, bribing me with half the sum, engaged me to perform the horrid deed.

“Thanks to my God! you are alive.—De Carrros is a villain, a perfidious villain; both he and Bissare shall experience, too soon, the effect of my revenge.”

He supplied the unfortunate Amantha with necessary refreshments, and medicines requisite for her recovery, together with linen and female attendance, and the next

day gave her the liberty to enter again the convent of St. Catherine's.

De Carros went, after leaving Biffare at the chapel door, to carry his prisoner her daily food. He found the gravedigger at work, and returned, without proceeding to the dungeon.

When he arrived at the cell of Biffare, according to her injunction in the chapel,

“ My God ! De Carros,” she exclaimed, “ last night I accompanied Jerome, by force, to the dungeon where the heretics are buried, to collect ingredients for a charm.”—

“ A charm ! ”——

“ Listen !——I trembled for the consequences, knowing that Amantha was confined at the extremity of the vault. I hesitated to proceed. He menaced me with death. At that instant a strong light flashed, at intervals, upon the broken walls of the passage. The sound of voices succeeded. I had nearly sunk upon the ground with terror. He hurled me from the vault, and desired me to leave him. I did so ;

but secreted myself in the aisle, and observed him take a female by the hand, who ascended from the vault in company with a gravedigger. I approached nearer towards them; she at that moment accidentally turned her head, and by the glimmering of the torch I discovered the features of Amantha."

"Hell and fury! How often have I urged the propriety and necessity of dispatching her! What is to be done? We are lost for ever!"

"Not so," replied Biffare: "let us complete our intention of murdering him to night."

"It cannot be effected.

Biffare's eyes flashed with contempt and indignation, as she exclaimed, "Do you hesitate to perpetrate a deed that is absolutely necessary to be done for the salvation of us both? You, or Jerome, must fall; inevitable destruction awaits one of you."

"Meet me to night in the solitudes of the garden, and we will consider of it."

“ Delay it not, upon your life,” she cried, with impetuous anger. “ Recollect the authority of an Inquisitor ; recollect the temper of Jerome. Amantha has by this time discovered enough to condemn us to the rack. To night, at the hour of twelve, expect me at your cell. I will give three distinct raps at the door. The dagger I shall provide for the purpose will not be stained with blood for the first time ; and if your courage is unequal to so mighty a task, I will do it. Absolution washes away every stain from the soul. Farewel.”

“ But a moment, Biffare,” said De Carros, “ stop, and hear what I have to say.”

The abbess left him with great precipitation, and the monk returned to his cell in deep reflection. He retired early to rest, under pretence of sickness ; and, as he lay musing upon his couch, he heard the clock strike eleven.

“ One hour more,” he cried, “ and the soul of the abandoned Jerome will stand before its God, crimsoned with the blood of

innocence, and shrouded in the most profligate and detestable crimes. It will be plunged"——

A loud rap at the door of his cell disturbed his soliloquy.

"Who is there?" he cried, rising from his bed.

"Father Ambrose," said a voice, "with a message from Jerome, who lies ill in bed, and wishes to commune with you."

He drew back the bolts of the door, to admit the pretended Ambrose, and was immediately seized by four men in masks, who, rushing into the room, wrapped him in a long black cloak, and carried him immediately to the prison of the Inquisition.

The hour of twelve approached; and Biffare, after having armed herself with a poniard, left her cell, and proceeded, without delay, to find De Carros. She entered the monastery through the private doorway in the garden. Having determined in her own mind to have Jerome murdered that night, and fearful De Carros might

urge the propriety of delay, she remained in the cloisters until the clock struck the fatal hour appointed for the purpose, when she immediately hastened to his cell, and rapped three times distinctly at the door.

"Who is there?" exclaimed a voice within.

She spoke not, but repeated the signal. —The door opened halfway, and closed again.

"De Carros," she exclaimed, "it is Biffare; the clock-has struck twelve."

Immediately two men rushed from the cell, and seizing the abbess, regardless of her cries and entreaties, hurried her into a dungeon, beneath the chapel.

She lay for some time senseless on the ground; but, roused by the grating of the heavy bolts without the door, she looked up, and beheld Jerome in his inquisitorial robes, standing before her. By his countenance she observed that the severest pangs of horror and revenge were master of his heart.

“ Rise, fiend of hell!” he exclaimed,
“ and follow me.”

He conducted her through several winding passages to an outlet into the garden, and from thence to a coach that was waiting for them at a wicket. It drove furiously to the Inquisition. She passed through the gloomy courts of this terrible prison, not without feeling the dreadful horror of her situation. Tapers, placed here and there, illumined, with their sepulchral rays, the dark and unshapen walls of the passages she passed through; and until she entered a room, the tapestry of which was stained with spots of blood, she knew not whither she was going. The tribunal covered with red, the various modes and instruments of torture that were displayed in needle work upon the canvass, the gloomy and savage appearance of her conductor, sufficiently convinced her of Jerome's intention. She sunk upon the floor in despair. A sudden noise at a small door, which apparently led into a closet, caused her to rise from the

ground, and she observed her guard extinguishing the small tapers that flamed in different parts of the apartment. Immediately afterwards, Jerome entered the room, attended by two other Inquisitors, and a man bearing a lamp. Some few minutes after they had appeared, De Carros entered the apartment, conducted by two torturers, and heavily ironed.

An awful silence prevailed. The culprits looked on each other with signs of guilt and terror. Jerome ordered a torturer to advance.

“Strike upon that bell,” he cried, pointing to one that stood upon the ground near him.

At the sound, a small door on the right hand side of the tribunal opened, and Amantha entered the room, clothed in the habit which she wore during her confinement in the dungeon.

“Look upon her, De Carros,” said Jerome. “Look upon her. Is she not Amantha? Wretch! is she not a victim of your

unpardonable villany? Have you any thing to say, that will controvert the fact?"

"There is a man, whose name is Alexo"—

"Speak not of him," cried Jerome, as he started from his chair. "Speak not of a man, whose heretical opinions condemn him to fly from the vengeance of this holy tribunal, this sacred institution, this divine instrument of punishment; but bring forward those who reverence our religion and authority.—Amantha, behold your barbarous persecutor at the bar of justice. Behold him expiate his crime with death."

The torturer presented him with a small goblet.

"Drink," continued Jerome, "to the salvation of your perjured soul. Be quick."

He hesitated, and was about to speak; when a ruffian immediately struck him a violent blow on the breast, and pointed to the goblet.

"Is there so much to fear, De Carros, that you thus remain, trembling upon the brink of eternity? Weep not, hypocrite;

but take the draught: time is swift of foot. Drink it, I say."

A sudden boldness of spirit seized the unfortunate man, and he swallowed the fatal draught; which, within the space of a few minutes, threw him into convulsions, and caused him to expire in the greatest agonies.

As his body lay upon the ground, Jerome addressed himself to Biffare.

"You are implicated in the crime which doomed De Carros to suffer the punishment of death; but, for private reasons, I resign you to these my superiors; their judgment will be the guide of mine, as to the punishment you deserve."

He immediately quitted the room with Amantha, leaving Biffare to the mercy of his brother Inquisitors.

No examination of evidence, to support the charge alledged against her by Jerome, took place; no attention was paid to the defence she made before them: but the judges of the most holy and divine tribunal

immediately condemned her to be starved to death in a dungeon, where the body of De Carros was also ordered to be buried. The sentence was to be put in execution that night; but no one knew of the poniard Biffare had armed herself with, to dispatch Jerome; and, before she left the tribunal, raising her eyes to heaven, she muttered an incoherent passage from a book which she held in her hand, and, plunging the dagger in her bosom, sunk at the feet of the Inquisitors.

Jerome entered the apartment, as she was expiring. When he approached her, she uttered a faint shriek, and taking, with much difficulty, a paper from her bosom, delivered it to the man who was raising her from the ground. Jerome instantly snatched it from his hand, and tore it into a thousand pieces.

“The dead,” he cried, “can speak ill of no one. Convey the body to the burying ground, and inter it before day-light appears.”

The Inquisitors were thunderstruck with his conduct; but, to question a brother's right of usurpation, would have dissolved that union of sentiment, so necessary to be respected amongst men, when villany is encouraged by them, in all its hellish and horrible designs: they therefore separated with great cordiality, and Jerome returned to his convent, apparently fully satisfied with his conduct. Although the matin bell was tolling as he entered his cell, he immediately retired to rest.—The murdered Bisfare stood before him in his dreams, and the ghastly spectre of De Carros pointed to the jaws of hell, which seemed ready to receive him. He took absolution in the morning, and then felt himself at liberty to continue his professional hypocrisies with as much zeal as he had done previous to that summary mode of freeing himself from guilt and iniquity.